

Y.S. JAGAN MOHAN REDDY,
PRESIDENT, YSR Congress Party,
LEADER OF OPPOSITION,
A.P. Legislative Assembly,
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Date: 16th April, 2018

Your Excellency,

Subject: Request for kind intervention for grant of Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh

At the outset, I wish to recall the acrimonious scenes and insensitive manner in which the will of the people of Andhra Pradesh was dusted out by brute force during the passage of the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganization Bill 2014. Against the will and wish of the people of Andhra Pradesh, the state was divided in an undemocratic and brazenly dictatorial manner, the voice of dissent was gagged with the black out of telecast, closing the doors of Parliament, suspension of members who were opposing the Bill even without taking their view point into consideration.

I would like to bring to your kind notice that, after the Bill was passed, Andhra Pradesh was torn away separating it from Telangana with Hyderabad. The promises made by the Central Government and the assurances given on the floor of the Parliament during the debate as a pre-condition to bifurcate Andhra Pradesh are not kept. The residual state of Andhra Pradesh, with all the shortcomings and disadvantages it had to carry, has been under utter neglect.

The then Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, while participating in the debate on AP Reorganization Bill in Rajya Sabha gave the following assurances:

- *"Special Category Status will be extended to the successor state of Andhra Pradesh along with other assurances."*

This was ratified by the then opposition parties, with Shri Venkaiah Naidu on the floor of the house, categorically requesting for grant of SCS for 10 years with a contention that 5 years would not be sufficient as setting up of industry itself would take 3 to 4 years and benefits should be extended for a longer period. Both the ruling and opposition party along with TDP got the AP Reorganization bill passed with a pre-condition that the state would be granted Special Category Status.

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The Union Cabinet, which met on 2nd March 2014, inter alia, approved and directed the Planning Commission of India to grant Special Category Status to the residuary state. Shri Narendhra Modi ji while campaigning for general elections 2014 at Tirupathi along with Shri Chandrababu Naidu, promised SCS to the residual state of Andhra Pradesh for a period of ten years to ensure sustained development and prosperity. Shri Chandrababu Naidu went a step ahead and demanded for 15 years, so that the state would be adequately compensated. The promise of SCS to Andhra Pradesh was included in the manifestoes of BJP and TDP as well.

While both BJP and TDP battled for SCS during electioneering, suddenly there were attempts for watering down the issue and the talk of a Special Financial Assistance (Special Package) came in to the scene, with the blessings of Shri Chandrababu Naidu, which was nothing but an eye wash.

Various reasons were professed for ignoring the just demand of the state:

1. It was stated that the Special Category Status has been dispensed with, due to the recommendations of 14th finance commission (FFC). However, even now as we speak the 11 states are continuing to receive the benefits of SCS. Recently, the members of FFC, Shri Abhijit Sen and Shri M. Govinda Rao, clarified in writing that the Commission did not recommend for the abolition of SCS to any state.
2. The then union cabinet, in its meeting resolved to grant Special Category Status to the successor state of AP on 2nd March 2014 and directions were also issued to the planning commission for its implementation. NITI Aayog came into existence on 1st Jan 2015. Though the directions of the union cabinet were lying with the planning commission for 10 months. Even after the NDA Government came into power in June 2014, the same was lying unattended for 7 months. The ruling Telugu Desam Government in Andhra Pradesh, being a coalition partner in NDA cabinet, did not pursue the matter with the planning commission, with this it is evident that planning commission is not responsible for not granting SCS to AP.
3. How is it fair to blame 14th finance commission for not granting SCS to AP as the union cabinet decided to grant SCS to AP on 2nd March 2014 when the 13th finance commission recommendations were in force. 14th finance commission has nothing to do with SCS to AP, as its recommendations were effective from 1st April 2015. Moreover, 14th finance commission never recommended for discontinuance of SCS to any state. Rather than looking for reasons to not grant SCS, it is very important in democracy to honor the assurance given to the state on the floor of the house.

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4. It was said that states which were given special status didn't create any jobs and investments. However, lakhs of jobs were created and thousands of industries were established in Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, J&K and other states having SCS as per the written reply given in the parliament. This could be achieved only because of special industrial incentives like cent percent IT and GST exemptions, rebate in power bills and other special incentives which are given only to the SCS states. If these special industrial incentives are not given to us, how can our state find reasonable ground to attract investments and create job opportunities to the lakhs of youth, which we have been deprived of due to exit of Hyderabad out of AP.
5. On bifurcation, our state went under a debt of Rs 97,000 Crores, accrued over a period of 60 years. In this past four years our state has borrowed an additional sum of Rs 1.20 Lakh Crore, taking the debt burden to whopping sum of Rs 2.20 Lakh Crore. With this level of debt and lack of industries, how can we survive without SCS? In this context, I humbly submit that, with the inflated figures, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh is giving a false impression that the state is progressing very fast and Lakhs of jobs are being created. On the contrary, the state of Andhra Pradesh is reeling through a very difficult phase with no trace of development and hence the Special Category Status alone can put Andhra Pradesh on the path of development.

As our struggle for the past four years to achieve Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh didn't yield any result, we gave a notice of No-Confidence Motion, in the Parliament, against the Union Government on 16th March 2018 as the interest of the people of Andhra Pradesh is of paramount importance to the YSRCP. Unfortunately, the leave for this No-Confidence Motion could not be granted under the pretext that the House was not in order. 12 other notices of No-Confidence Motion given repeatedly were also put to the same fate; the balance budget session of the House was washed out in pandemonium.

All our efforts to impress upon the Union Government about the dire need to grant SCS to Andhra Pradesh has gone unheeded. Witnessing the way, the life line of Andhra Pradesh was dealt with in the temple of democracy, trust imposed by the people of Andhra Pradesh in the Parliament has been shattered. As the last resort, all the 5 Lok-Sabha MPs of our YSR Congress Party tendered their resignations in Speaker's format. On resignation, as announced earlier, these 5 MPs protested by going on an Indefinite Fast. These fasting MPs were forcibly shifted from the venue i.e. AP Bhavan to RML hospital by local authorities.

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In a parliamentary democracy such as ours, if an assurance given on the floor of the House to a state as a pre-condition to bifurcate is not honoured, people will lose confidence in the overall democratic process. This seriously endangers the world renowned Democracy of our country. Sir, if the highest values of the Indian Parliamentary Democracy and its conventions are to be honoured and enhanced, we request your kind intervention to prevail upon the Government of India to grant Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh without which the Residuary State of Andhra Pradesh can never prosper.

With warm regards,

Yours Sincerely,

(YS Jagan Mohan Reddy)

His Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind Ji,
The President of India,
Rashtrapati Bhavan,
New Delhi - 110004