

21.06.2021

Shri Kumar Jayant,
Hon'ble Principal Secretary to the Government,
Government of Tamil Nadu.

Subject: RAI appeal for permitting Garment retailers to operate while following social distancing norms.

Hon'ble Principal Secretary,

Greetings from the Retailers Association of India (RAI)!

Sir, we appreciate the untiring efforts of the State Authorities in managing the second wave of the pandemic. The pandemic has been brutal on individuals and businesses alike and we believe that it's important for the state to help minimise impact and to aid recovery.

RAI Submission for the opening of non-essential retailers:

As the Government takes measures to restart economic activities in a calibrated manner to ensure the safety and well-being of citizens, **we urge the Government to permit garment retailers to restart operations as well.**

Sir, our humble submission to you is that:

1. In addition to permitted activities vide **G.O. Ms No. 409, dated 20.06.2021**, citizens in the state also require and have been inquiring about clothing, apparel and garments for daily use.
2. Non-essential shops, including garments and apparel, have been experiencing reduced footfall throughout the day and social distancing can easily be achieved in such shops. Hence, **permitting non-essential shops would allow customers to shop for daily needs while ensuring COVID appropriate behaviour is followed.**
3. Moreover, to enable fulfilling these needs of the citizens without hardships; garment retailers should be allowed to open subject to following COVID appropriate behaviour and strict adherence of social distancing norms.
4. Permitting shops to operate for full working hours daily will ensure retailers can effectively implement social distancing norms and avoid overcrowding.

Sir, we would like to apprise you that:

1. Retail businesses are under tremendous financial strain due to the extended closures. The financial pressures are on various fronts such as salaries, rentals, electricity charges, and various taxes and license fees among others.
2. Retail is a people-intensive industry. Tamil Nadu has more than 1 million retailers which employ approx. 5 million citizens in the state. 90% of Retail employees work at the stores, earning minimum wages and living a hand-to-mouth existence. With extended closures, these employees are at risk of being retrenched
3. With the closure and projected slowdown of retail consumption, the entire supply chain will be under stress. Distributors, C&F, Manufacturers, raw material suppliers, the entire value chain will have order cancellation and loss of income, which will lead to unemployment at their end as well.

With all the precautionary measures in place, we hope you will consider our appeal and allow non-essential retailers to resume operations.

We assure you of our constant support in the fight against COVID-19.

Warm regards,



**Kumar Rajagopalan,
CEO - RAI**