

12.06.2021

**Shri M. K. Stalin,**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Tamil Nadu.

**Subject: RAI appeal for opening up the non-essentials retail activities including apparel, footwear, etc. while following social distancing norms.**

***Hon'ble Chief Minister,***

**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 non-essential retailers to restart operations.**

**Sir, our humble submission to you is that:**

1. In addition to home appliances and electronic items, citizens also require and have been inquiring about clothing, footwear due to the rainy season, work-related and kitchen-related essentials among other items of day-to-day use.
2. Non-essential shops of 1000 sq. ft get a maximum of 10-15 footfall throughout the day and social distancing can easily be achieved. 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; non-essential retailers should be allowed to open and should be encouraged to take orders over the phone and other electronic means for home deliveries.

Allowing non-essential retailers to operate and carry out home deliveries from shops will ensure that people have fewer reasons to step outside, there is the easy availability of non-essential supplies, and stricter adherence to social distancing.

**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,



**Gautam Jain,**  
Director – Finance & Advocacy,  
RAI

**Cc:**

1. **Dr. V Irai Anbu**, Hon. Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu.