

**Announcements of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural
Development and Local Administration
2006-07**

Local Bodies

1. Elections to the Local Bodies will be conducted this year (as per schedule) within the specified time period.
2. Elections shall be held after reserving seats and offices for Scheduled Cates, Scheduled Tribes and Women as per Rotation.
3. An Expert Committee will be formed to recommend the upgradation, bifurcation and realignment of boundaries of Local Bodies.
4. An Expert Committee will be formed to study the existing powers and duties of the Local Bodies and make recommendations for further devolution of powers.

Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam

5. In the Budget speech, a new scheme called Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam has been announced from the current year onwards for creation of basic amenities in Village Panchayats. Under the scheme, the Government will allocate Rs.2,500 crores for a five year period covering 12,618 Village Panchayats of Tamil Nadu. In terms of allocations, this will be the biggest among all the Centrally Sponsored and State Funded Schemes currently under implementation by this Department.

Indira Awaas Yojana

6. The State Government has been providing Rs.12,000/- for RCC roofing under Indira Awaas Yojana since 1988. The previous Government reduced this amount to Rs.9,000/- in the year 2004. However, this amount will be increased from Rs.9,000/- to Rs.12,000/- for RCC roofing for 49,850 houses to be taken up for construction this year. The State Government has provided an additional allocation of Rs.15 crores for this purpose.

Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme

7. I am happy to announce that our Hon'ble Chief Minister has increased the allocation under Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme from Rs.1 crore to Rs.1.20 crores. This will result in an additional expenditure of Rs.47 crores annually for the State Government.
8. Members of Legislative Assembly can purchase computer, printer and Broadband Internet Connection under Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme.

Best Village Panchayat Award

9. In order to honour their achievements, Village Panchayats which have taken special and innovative initiatives, will be selected for giving Uthamar Gandhi Award. Every year 15 Village Panchayats will be selected for the Award and each Panchayat will be given a cash incentive of Rs.5 Lakhs , a Certificate and a Citation.

Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF)

10. 889 bus plying roads in Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions for a total length of 1543 k.m. will be strengthened at a cost of Rs. 107 crores with NABARD assistance.

Census of families living Below Poverty Line

11. Complaints have been received that the census of people living Below Poverty Line undertaken in 2002 was not conducted properly. Hence, the existing BPL list will be displayed for public scrutiny in the respective Village Panchayat Offices. After verification of objections received, revised BPL list shall again be displayed in Village Panchayats. Along with that revised list shall also be put on the Website.

Revolving fund for the Self Help Groups in Urban areas

12. Under Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, Self Help Groups in the rural areas are being provided Revolving Fund of Rs. 10,000/- as subsidy. Similarly, the Self Help Groups in urban areas from Below Poverty Line, which have passed credit rating will also be provided with Revolving Fund of Rs. 10,000/- as Subsidy from the State Government funds from this year. A sum of Rs.5 crores has been allocated for this purpose.

Awards to motivate Self Help Groups

13. To motivate the best performing Women Self Help Groups and Panchayat Level Federations functioning at Union, District and State Level, an Award called 'Manimegalai Award' will be instituted. A sum of Rs. 35 lakhs has been allocated for this purpose.

Exemption from Payment of Earnest Money Deposit for Self Help Groups

14. Similar to the concessions available to the Small Scale Industries, the Government will examine providing exemption to Self Help Groups from the payment of Earnest Money Deposit to enable them to participate in the Government tenders.

Strengthening of Panchayat Level Federations

15. A very important objective of the Government is to strengthen the Self Help Group Panchayat Level Federations as a strong people's movement. In order to fulfill this objective, training will be provided and 4000 Federations will be given an initial grant of Rs.10,000/- each this year. Moreover, these Federations will be given more duties and responsibilities.

World Bank aided 'Vazhndhu Kaattuvom' Project

16. The Tamil Nadu Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Project for improvement in the lives of poorest of the poor people, will be implemented from this year with World Bank Assistance. This Project will be implemented in 2,432 Village Panchayats in 70 Panchayat Unions of 15 Districts at a cost of Rs. 717 crores for six years. This year a sum of Rs. 162 crores has been allocated for this project.

Exhibition cum Sales Centre for Self Help Groups at Chennai

17. For sale of products of Women Self Help Groups functioning in all the districts of Tamil Nadu, an Exhibition cum Sales Centre will be constructed at a cost of around Rs.5 crores in the place allotted for this purpose near Valluvar Kottam.

Economic Assistance for Tsunami Livelihood Improvements

18. Under the Asian Development Bank aided scheme being implemented in the Tsunami affected 12 coastal districts.
- ❖ A grant of Rs. 10,000/- will be provided for the economic upliftment of the Physically Challenged, who find it difficult to raise loan from the Bank.
 - ❖ Revolving Fund will be provided to the Self Help Groups under this project with Rs.30,000/- as subsidy and Rs.15,000/- as Bank Loan.
 - ❖ The 4% interest subsidy shall be provided for the bank loan under Economic.
 - ❖ A sum of Rs. 133 crores towards Revolving Fund and Economic Assistance for Self Help Groups, Rs.19 crores for Capacity Building and Rs.38 crores for Infrastructure will be allocated.

Staff Welfare

The previous A.I.A.D.M.K Government has not implemented any Welfare Scheme for the Staff of the Rural Development Department. The Officials of the Department have undergone lot of suffering during the Government officials strike. The works of the Department suffered due to the reduction in the staff strength and non-filling up of the vacant posts. To begin with, the following Welfare Schemes will be implemented to reduce the difficulties faced by the staff of this Department: -

19. At present there is a 10% quota for the eligible Panchayat Assistants for promotion as Junior Assistants. The Government will examine increasing this quota to 20%.
20. The Panchayat Assistants and Part-time Clerks working in the Village Panchayats will be given Time Scale of Pay from 1.9.2006. Full-time Panchayat Assistants will be given a Time Scale of Pay of Rs. 1300-20-1500-25-2000 and the Part-time Clerks will get Time scale of Rs. 625-10-725-20-925. This will result in an additional expenditure of Rs. 3 crores for the State Government. This will benefit the Panchayat Assistants and Part-time Clerks working in 12,618 Village Panchayats.
21. Special Provident Fund for the staff of Panchayat Unions will be increased from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 10,000/-, which is similar to the amount given to the Government Servants.
22. The Government is examining the relaxation of rule provision which stipulates compulsory one year tenure as Extension Officer (Panchayats) for Extension Officers for qualifying for promotion as Deputy Block Development Officers.
23. The strike period of Rural Development Department Officers from 4.5.2000 to 15.5.2000 has not been regularized as duty period so far. The Government have now decided to regularize this strike period as duty period.

**M.K. Stalin,
Minister for Rural Development and
Local Administration.**