

**Announcements of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural
Development and Local Administration
2008-09**

1. Rural Infrastructure Scheme

Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been extended to all the districts from 1.4.2008 onwards, the Central Government has discontinued the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY). Consequent to this, there is no proper scheme at present to create basic infrastructure facilities like Cement Concrete Roads and Buildings. Further, it has become essential to make the assets created under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme durable by stabilizing them. Taking into consideration the representations received in this regard, a new scheme called 'Rural Infrastructure Scheme' will be introduced during 2008-09 with an allocation of Rs. 350 crores for this year.

2. Indira Awaas Yojana

You are aware that the Tamil Nadu Government has been providing an additional amount of Rs.12,000/- for each house towards RCC roofing cost. This amount of Rs.12,000/- will be increased to Rs.20,000/- from the current financial year onwards. Further, the Central Government has announced an increase in the Unit Cost by Rs.10,000/-.

Hence, the total Unit Cost of a new Group house will increase from the existing Rs.37,000/- to Rs.55,000/-.

3. Revolving Fund for all the eligible Women Self Help Groups

There are Rs.1.50 lakh eligible Women Self Help Groups in Urban and Rural areas which have not received Revolving Fund. Considering this situation, the Government have decided to provide Revolving Fund to all the eligible Women Self Help Groups this year at a cost of Rs.150 crores. This will not only enable each Self Help Group to receive a Revolving Fund subsidy of Rs.10,000/-, but also an additional amount upto Rs.30,000/- through banks as loan amount.

4. Re-organizing the Panchayat Union Boundaries in consonance with the Delimitation of Assembly Constituencies.

Before the Delimitation of Assembly Constituencies which has been completed recently, each Assembly Constituency consisted of one or two Panchayat Unions entirely and one or two Panchayat Unions partly. During the process of Delimitation of Assembly Constituencies, only the Revenue Villages and Revenue Taluks were taken into account instead of Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions. It is understood that the boundaries of four or more Panchayat Unions fall partly in each Assembly Constituency.

This will result in a situation whereby a Member of Legislative Assembly has to keep in touch with several Panchayat Unions. Similarly, Panchayat Union Chairpersons will have to be in contact with two or three Members of Legislative Assembly. Several Members of Legislative

Assembly have also represented for reorganizing the Panchayat Union Boundaries in consonance with the boundaries of Assembly Constituencies.

Further, there is a wide variation among the Panchayat Unions in terms of number of Panchayats, population and area. The Panchayat Union boundaries have been altered only on a few occasions in the last 45 years. Hence, it is the right time now to reorganize the boundaries of Panchayat Unions.

Already Government have issued orders regarding upgradation, downgradation, bifurcation and amalgamation of rural and urban Local Bodies. Accordingly, the District Collectors have conducted public sittings and are in the process of preparing their proposals. Along with this, necessary action will be taken through District Collectors to delimit the boundaries of Panchayat Unions in such a way that only full Panchayat Union forms part of an Assembly Constituency. However, the alteration of Panchayat Union boundaries will not, in anyway, affect the present term of office of the elected representatives.

This will come into force in the next Ordinary election to Local Bodies to be held in 2011.

5. Periyar Ninaivu Samathuvapuram

To promote Social Justice and to spread Thanthai Periyar's message of social equality, unity and brotherhood among the people, Hon'ble Chief Minister introduced Samathuvapuram Scheme in 1997 and 145 Samathuvapurams were established in the State. The Hon'ble Chief Minister has now announced that another 95 Samathuvapurams will be established. Accordingly, during the year 2008-09, 29 new Samathuvapurams will be established in the first phase. The Government have allotted a sum of Rs.75 crores necessary for implementation of this scheme.

6. Namakku Naame Thittam

Namakku Naame Thittam focuses on involvement of the People, including their financial contribution, in the development activities. This Government has re-introduced this scheme from the year 2007-08 onwards. Taking into account the good response for the scheme among the Public, Government has decided to allot Rs.50 crores this year also for this scheme.

Tamilians residing in other countries have often expressed their desire to help their home towns and the people living there. In this year's Budget speech, it has been announced that a Trust will be formed to receive donations from such contributors, for implementing the works desired by them, similar to the Namakku Naame Thittam. Accordingly, a Trust will be formed for implementation of the Scheme.

7. Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam

Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam has been successfully implemented during the years 2006-07 and 2007-08. This scheme will be implemented in 2,521 Village Panchayats at an estimated cost of Rs.509 crores during the year 2008-09 also.

8. Improvement of Rural Roads with NABARD Assistance

In addition to providing basic amenities in Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam Villages, it is proposed to upgrade the rural roads that are connecting and passing through the Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam Village Panchayats.

In 2006-07 AGAMT Village Panchayats, upgradation of rural roads to the length of 3,989 kms has been taken up at a cost of Rs.410 crores with NABARD assistance.

Similarly, upgradation of 3,205 kms length of rural roads in 2007-08 AGAMT Village Panchayats will be taken up at a cost of Rs.409 crores after obtaining approval from NABARD.

9. B.T. Road works under Twelfth Finance Commission Grants

Similar to the improvement of rural B.T. road works taken up during the years 2006-07 and 2007-08, improvement of the worn-out B.T. roads will be taken up this year also, at an estimated cost of Rs.103.60 crores.

10. Panchayat Union School Renovation Programme

There are around 27,000 Primary and Middle Schools in Tamil Nadu. Due to lack of proper maintenance, most of these School buildings have become dilapidated. Hence, a special scheme called 'Panchayat Union School Renovation Programme' was introduced during 2006-07 to repair and renovate such long neglected School buildings.

Under this scheme, 10,248 Schools in 2006-07 and 2007-08 Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam Village Panchayats have been taken up for renovation.

During the year 2008-09, around 5,000 Schools in the Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam Village Panchayats will be taken up for renovation at a cost of Rs.60 crores.

11. Equitable distribution of funds to Panchayat Unions

Many of the Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions do not get adequate funds when apportionment is made on the population criteria alone. In order to overcome this situation in Village Panchayats, a minimum annual grant of Rs.3 lakhs is being given to each Village Panchayat from last year onwards. Similarly, from this year onwards, a minimum annual grant of Rs.30 lakhs will be given to each Panchayat Union. The balance amount will be apportioned to Panchayat Unions on Population basis.

12. New Office buildings for Panchayat Unions

Many Office buildings of Panchayat Unions are in a dilapidated condition. During the year 2008-09, Government will allocate Rs.50 crores for construction of new Office buildings for 50 Panchayat Unions, in the first phase. This scheme will be extended in a phased manner.

13. Separate Vehicles for Panchayat Union Chairpersons

There are 2 Vehicles in use in each Panchayat Union. An additional 100 litres of fuel is being provided for one of these vehicles for the use of Panchayat Union Chairperson. However, the Government have accepted the representations received for provision of a separate vehicle for Panchayat Union Chairpersons, and have decided to provide new vehicles for 385 Panchayat Union Chairpersons this year. 385 Driver posts will be newly created for this purpose.

14. Employment Oriented Skill Training for 25,000 Youths

As per the announcement made by this Government to provide skill training for youths, 11,485 youths have been trained in the last two years through reputed industrial houses and institutions thereby creating employment opportunities for them.

This scheme will be extended during the year 2008-09 with an allotment of Rs.20 crores for providing skill training to 25,000 youth.

15. Formation of 25,000 new Self Help Groups

So far Rs.3.65 lakhs Self Help Groups have been formed through Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women. However, less than 25 percent Women alone are members of Self Help Groups in 3,644 Village Panchayats. Hence, 25,000 new Self Help Groups will be formed this year by giving special attention to the remaining women folk in these Village Panchayats and by giving priority to poor women who are at present benefitted under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

16. Legal recognition for the Self Help Groups Federations

Due to the various steps taken by this Government, the Self Help Group Panchayat Level Federations have received a new lease of life and have started functioning in an appreciable manner.

Though the Women Self Help Groups do not have legal recognition, they are able to get loans from the banks due to the instructions issued by the Reserve Bank of India in this regard. However, this concession is not applicable for the Self Help Groups Federations. Hence, in order to enable these Federations to raise bank loans, it has been decided to register them under Tamil Nadu Societies Registrations Act, 1975.

17. Establishment

- ❖ Over a period of time, large number of representations have been received by the Government, for upgradation of the posts of Extension Officer to the level of Deputy Block Development Officer.
Government have favourably considered this long pending demand and have decided to upgrade the posts of Extension Officers in this department as Deputy Block Development Officers.
- ❖ At present, the Makkal Nala Panniyalargal working in the Village Panchayats are getting a total emolument of Rs. 1000/- with a Consolidated Pay of Rs. 950/- and Fixed Travelling Allowance of Rs.50/-. They have given representations to the Government to increase their Pay. Necessary Orders will be issued on this representation based on the recommendations of the Committee to be appointed for implementing the orders issued by Central Government, to give effect to the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission.
- ❖ Government will examine the filling up 50% of the vacant posts of Record Clerk, Office Assistant, Night Watchman and other equivalent posts from among the eligible Makkal Nala Panniyalargal.
- ❖ The following new posts will be created and filled up in order to ensure expeditious and qualitative implementation of development works in the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department:

Assistant Executive Engineers	32
Superintendents in the rank of Block Development Officers	30
Assistant Engineers	212
Deputy Block Development Officers	385
Assistants	415
Overseers	673
Junior Draughting Officers	32
Drivers	32
Office Assistants	32
Computer Assistants	800

- ❖ To undertake field inspections and implement the development works expeditiously and qualitatively, 250 new Vehicles will be provided to Assistant Directors, Block Development Officers and Assistant Engineers at a cost of Rs.11.75 crores.

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