

**Announcements of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural
Development and Local Administration
2007-08**

Devolution of Funds from State Government to rural Local Bodies

1. Devolution of Funds from the State's own Tax Revenue to the Local Bodies will be increased from the existing 8% to 9% in the current financial year. Due to this, as well as the increase in revenue, the devolution of funds to the rural Local Bodies will increase from Rs. 1,225 crores in 2006-07 to Rs. 1,586 crores during 2007-08. This will result in 30% increase i.e., an additional grant of Rs. 361 crores to the rural Local Bodies this year.

2. It is the duty of the Village Panchayats to provide and maintain basic amenities such as drinking water supply, sanitation, roads and street lights. Taking this into consideration, the share of the Village Panchayats from out of the grants to the rural Local Bodies, shall be increased from existing 47% to 60% for the year 2007-08. Further, the system of devolution of funds based on the population alone is not adequate for the Village Panchayats. Hence it has been decided to give a minimum grant of Rs.3 lakhs every year to each Village Panchayat and to apportion the balance amount on the basis of population. This will enable the Village Panchayats to become self-sufficient in providing basic amenities to the Public.

Panchayat Union School Renovation Programme

3. In Tamil Nadu there are around 22,000 Panchayat Union Primary Schools and 4,500 Middle Schools. These School Buildings have become dilapidated due to lack of maintenance for several years. In order to change this situation and provide conducive atmosphere for learning in Schools, this Government will implement a new scheme called Panchayat Union School Renovation Programme from this year. Repair and renovation of school buildings will be taken up, and if necessary, electrification will be done and fans and lights will be provided under this scheme. A sum of Rs. 135 crores will be allocated for this scheme.

Telephone facility for the offices of all Village Panchayats

4. To enable the public and officials to contact the Village Panchayats, the offices of all Village Panchayats will be provided with telephone facility this year. This will also facilitate the Village Panchayats to access internet through computers.

Award for Commercial and Industrial Establishments functioning with Social Responsibility

5. To motivate and encourage the Commercial and Industrial establishments which show exemplary attitude towards discharging their Corporate Social Responsibility, an award amount of Rs.5 lakhs and a Certificate will be issued to such selected establishments from this year onwards. A sum of Rs. 25 lakhs will be allotted for this purpose.

Training Fund and augmentation of Facilities

6. Government have decided to create a Training Corpus Fund for organizing training programmes to the elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions on Panchayat Raj Administration and Implementation of Rural Development Schemes. An amount of Rs. 3 crores will be set apart for the Training Corpus Fund every year. This fund will also utilized to undertake exposure visits of the elected representatives within and outside the State in order to acquire first hand knowledge about the good practices elsewhere. Further, infrastructure facilities will be augmented in the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development in the State at a cost of Rs. 3.50 crores.

Modernization of Rural Development Department Administration

7. Wireless communication is essential during Natural Calamities for monitoring the implementation of development schemes and for providing uninterrupted communication facilities between the district and block administration. Initially in 17 districts, officers of Rural Development Department at district level and block level will be provided with wireless sets at a cost of Rs. 4 crores.

Solving the TNEB related issues of Local Bodies

- 8.1. The previous Government introduced a system of preparation of separate estimates for extension of street lights. This resulted in undue delays and higher expenditure in the installation of street lights. Now, it has been decided to change this system by fixing a

uniform rate per pole of Rs. 9,500/- per pole for this work with effect from 13.3.2007.

- 8.2 Government have reduced rate of penalty on arrears of consumption charges payable to Electricity Board from 12% to 6% with effect from 13.03.2007 and has written off the entire penalty amount pending before this period.
- 8.3 The period of payment for EB Charges from the receipt of demand has been increased from 20 days to 60 days with effect from 13.3.2007 onwards for Local Bodies.
- 8.4 Government have issued instructions to fix meters for all the EB Connections in the Local Bodies and to record the opening and closing readings in the meter cards.

Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme

9. Out of Rs. 120 lakhs allotted to a Member of Legislative Assembly under the scheme, Rs.60 lakhs has been earmarked for priority works specified by the Government. The remaining Rs. 60 lakhs can be utilized for taking up works which have not been earmarked. From the earmarked amount of Rs. 60 lakhs, works like B.T. roads, Cement Concrete roads will be taken up in the rural areas. In Urban areas B.T. roads, Cement Concrete roads and Cement Concrete Pavements with storm water drainage will be taken up.

Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam

10. During last year Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam was implemented in 2,540 Village Panchayats at a cost of Rs. 508 crores. This scheme will be implemented this year also, in 2,534 Village Panchayats at a cost of Rs. 507 crores.
11. To ensure proper functioning of sports centres for the benefit of youth in rural areas, Government will permit the Village Panchayats to incur an expenditure of upto Rs. 10,000/- per year for maintenance of such centres.

Maintenance of Roads

12. During the year 2006-07, improvement works of the damaged roads in Panchayats and Panchayat Unions were taken up at a cost of Rs.103.60 crores from Twelfth Finance Commission Grant. This year also improvement works of damaged roads will be taken up at a cost of Rs. 103.60 crores.

New Building for the State Election Commission

13. Government have allotted Rs. 1.50 crores for the construction of Office Building with a Conference Hall for the State Election Commission.

Identity Card for the Self Help Groups

14. The Self Help Groups started by this Government in 1989, have achieved a remarkable growth today. To provide a recognition for these groups in the society and to enable them to easily access the Government Offices and Banks, it has been decided to issue Identity Cards to all the Women Self Help Groups at the expense of Government. The Identity Cards will contain the details of members of the Group, savings of the Group, loan and other information. Rs.2.50 crores has been allotted for this purpose this year.

Basic Education for the Women Self Help Groups

15. At present more than 54 lakh women have benefited by joining in the Self Help Groups as members. However, a substantial number of women in the Self Help Groups in rural areas are illiterate. "Educating a Woman is equivalent to Educating a Family". Hence, Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of Women will implement a flagship scheme of providing basic education to the women who are members of Self Help Groups, in 1,000 Village Panchayats this year through "Primary Education for All". This scheme will be called as "Self Help Group Education Scheme". Government have allotted Rs.1.75 crores for the scheme this year.

Organizing Competitions among Self Help Group Panchayat Level Federations

16. In order to strengthen the Unity and Team spirit among the members of Self Help Groups and bring out their hidden talents, competitions will be conducted at Block and District levels, on "Samathuva Pongal Day" , among Panchayat Level Federations and prizes and awards shall be distributed to them. A sum of Rs.1.60 crores has been allotted by the Government for this purpose.

Tsunami Rehabilitation Work

17. "Vulnerable Houses" which are lying within 200 meters from the HTL-shore and other houses in damaged condition, constructed under various Government schemes within 1000 meters of HTL, numbering 15,869 will be reconstructed at a cost of Rs. 396.72 crores from the funds of Rajiv Gandhi Rehabilitation Package. The houses will be constructed on an area of 325 sq.ft. Moreover, basic amenities will be provided to these houses at a cost of Rs.40,000/- each.
18. To promote handicrafts, which are part of our cultural heritage, a Crafts Village will be established in Villupuram District and a Sculptors' Park will be established in Mammalapuram at an estimate of Rs. 10 crores with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank.

Administrative Infrastructure and Staff Welfare

19. To undertake field inspections and implement the development works expeditiously and qualitatively, 123 new vehicles will be provided to officers such as Block Development Officers, Assistant Directors, Assistant Executive Engineers and Executive Engineers at a cost of Rs. 5.62 crores.
20. The existing sanction of fuel for the vehicles allotted to Block Development Offices is not adequate for effective monitoring and supervision of Rural Development Works. Hence, it has been decided to increase the monthly fuel allotment for the two Block Development Officers from 100 liters to 150 liters and for the Panchayat Union Chairpersons, from 75 liters to 100 liters.
21. To improve the facilities in the district level offices of Rural Development Department, 416 Photocopiers will be provided for the offices of 29 Assistant Directors (Audit) and 385 Panchayat Unions. Further, Fax Machines will be provided for 385 Panchayat Unions. Government have allotted Rs. 2.92 crores for this purpose.
22. Government have allotted an amount of Rs. 80 lakhs for the construction of new office buildings in the Collectorate Campus for the Assistant Directors (Audit) in Cuddalore, Dharmapuri, Thanjavur and Kanniyakumari Districts and Camp Office for Project Officer, District Rural Development Agency of Salem District.
23. When this Government was in power during 1996-2001, Pongal Special Adhoc Bonus was given to the full time and part-time

Panchayat Clerks, Over Head Tank Operators and Sanitary Workers working in the Village Panchayats. This was discontinued by the previous Government. Special Adhoc Bonus of Rs. 300/- will be given from this year onwards.

24. There were a large number of vacancies in the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department when this Government assumed power in May 2006. This affected the implementation of development programmes tremendously. Hence, this Government have issued the following orders.

- ❖ Filling up of posts of 30 Assistant Directors, 187 Assistant Engineers and 1,001 Junior Assistants through Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission.
- ❖ Filling up of posts of 630 Typists and Steno-typists through the Department of Technical Education.
- ❖ Filling up of the posts of 407 Overseers, 54 Junior Draughting Officers, 657 Road Inspectors and 63 Office Assistants through the Employment Exchange.
- ❖ Filling up of vacant posts of 402 Junior Assistants and Office Assistants on Compassionate grounds.
- ❖ Filling up of posts of 202 Night Watchmen and Drivers through TEXCO.

- ❖ Making 47 persons who have been working on Daily Wages, permanent.

This Government have identified 17,819 vacant posts including the posts of Makkal Nala Paniyalargal and issued orders for filling up of these posts. So far, 13,999 vacant posts have been filled up. The balance 3,820 vacant posts will be filled up during this year.

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