

Minutes of Permanent Shelter Review Meeting

Date: 14th October' 2005

Time: 7:00pm to 8:00pm

Venue: Main Conference Hall,
Collectorate, Nagai.

Presided by the District Collector, Dr. J Radhakrishnan, Additional Collector, Mr. Ranvir Prasad and the Special Deputy Collector (SDC), Mr. Raman, the weekly review meeting with NGOs working in Permanent shelter began.

The first and foremost matter addressed by the collector was with regard to inviting officials for foundation stone laying ceremony for construction work:

- ♦ He requested all the NGOs to invite the local governing bodies like Ward Counselors, Village Officers, Block Development Officers, MPs, Panchayat Heads, etc. as part of protocol.
- ♦ Most of the local officials are from opposition parties. Giving due respect and inviting them would help avoiding controversies and create a mutual understanding for support in near future.
- ♦ Around 90% of the NGOs seem to be consciously inviting the local government coordinators. The remaining 10% is also requested to do the same.

Secondly, complains have been received that the number of unidentified visitors and trespassers to temporary shelters is increasing.

- ♦ In the name of surveys, studies and reviewing the activities of NGOs, unnecessary people are intruding into the shelters and disturbing the residents.
- ♦ NGOs need to find way to safeguard their respective temporary shelters and encourage only genuine cases by giving prior notice to the people staying there.
- ♦ NCRC has been instructed to coordinate all NGOs to carry out this safeguarding process.

Also, the collector and additional collector shall be informed well in advance before being invited for any occasion so that they can schedule their programme. This will help avoid repentance on part of the communities as well as NGOs.

One very important issue was raised. GGF is caught up in a very pathetic and dilemmatic state of affairs in its permanent housing work.

- ♦ GGF constructed one of the best temporary shelters for the community. But the same community is showing dejection in permanent shelter construction by GGF.
- ♦ It has been alleged that they are not providing quality houses and construction designs compared to other NGOs working in near by localities.
- ♦ GGF has proved that the allegations are wrong and that they are maintaining the minimal standards. In fact, they agreed to re-work on the plans and build satisfactory houses.
- ♦ Such circumstances can be avoided by setting up a monitoring committee of experts who can supervise as well as guide the NGOs on field.
- ♦ NCRC shall help develop healthier link between the NGOs and the respective village panchayats. Encouraging owner – participation in construction work will also, to a large extent, help reduce this gap.

Site plan and layout, blue prints of the proposed house or at least a rough sketch of the houses to be constructed has been demanded for from all the NGOs at the earliest.

Appreciation was provided for the substantial progress that has occurred in the past one week.

- ♦ It was observed that majority of the NGOs for whom land acquisition issues were sorted out, have begun construction.
- ♦ Lot of NGOs have started in-situ construction and many others starting work in new land in the week ahead. It was highlighted that construction in places like Puthupalli, Ullavar Street, Villundamavadi, Chinnagudi is progressing quite well.
- ♦ Few other NGOs have begun work but consistent progress is rare. It was proposed that Man, Materials and Money have to be increased to speed up work. Also, no delay in work shall happen due to legal procedures like registration. SDC be informed and approval will be attained immediately.
- ♦ It was suggested that the NGOs who started work and are facing no troubles, need not come for all the review meetings but submit the weekly progress report to the SDC without fail.
- ♦ Work in Padiyar, pallar, kuttiandi, vellankoil and other places have to be pushed hard. Those NGOs who are slightly behind the schedule need to speed up to achieve the target.
- ♦ Criticality in construction work will be faced due to the heavy rains that are approaching. Followed by that will be the Election season which will put lot of pressure.
- ♦ To avoid any kind of criticism, from either the community or the bureaucrats', visual development on construction sites is important.

The following decisions and suggestions were put forth to deal with the matters that are pending from a long time.

- ♦ Any issues or problems faced by the NGOs shall be brought to the notice of the Additional collector or SDC on Wednesdays of every week. Solutions for the same will be sort out immediately or in the weekly meeting on Fridays.
- ♦ As far as materials for construction is concerned, there are suppliers for all kinds quality products in Nagapattinam district itself. The NGOs are requested to purchase materials from local suppliers to reduce transportation cost and also save time.
- ♦ Similarly, sufficient labour force is present in the district itself. Hiring them will be appreciated as involvement level will be higher and livelihood avenues increased. Importing labour from neighbouring places or outside is not recommended.

Before the meeting was wind up, Mr. Srinivasan from UNDP was introduced. He has newly joined NCRC and taken charge of coordinating work in Nagapattinam district along with Ms. Annie George, CEO, NCRC. His vast experience in various disaster situations and knowledge shall be explored for the betterment of the district and its people.