

An Appraisal of the TNSCB Resettlement Colony at Perumbakkam (October 2015)

The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board resettlement colony located at Perumbakkam, Kanchipuram district is a project being implemented under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission to house 20,000 families that the Government intends to evict from various parts of Chennai city. So far 3,936 units have been completed and inaugurated of the 20,000 units sanctioned. The rest are in various stages of completion. Thus far approximately 3,000 families have been relocated to this resettlement colony. These were the families who were earlier evicted from Perumbakkam to facilitate the construction of the colony and who were temporarily housed in the Semmenchery resettlement colony. As part of the Transparent Cities Network (TCN), the Community Outreach and Advocacy team at Citizen, consumer and civic Action Group (CAG) made a visit to the Perumbakkam resettlement colony on 16th October 2015 to do a preliminary enquiry about the facilities and services that are available to residents. The TCN@CAG team collected the following information through direct observation and interviews with residents.

Design Challenges:

The colony is built in blocks, each having G+7 floors, with 24 houses per floor, totalling 192 units per block. Though 2 lifts are provided for every block, the residents said that they have been asked to use only one of the lifts, the other being for use only when the regular lift is under repair. The corridors are poorly lit and poorly ventilated and are dark even during the day.

Roads:

The damaged roads are filled with rainwater. In a few blocks, we observed that the manholes were damaged and left open in the middle of the roads, posing a grave danger to residents and visitors alike.

Water and Sanitation:

Each house is connected to the Metro Water network and residents said that they get continuous supply of water all day long. This Metro Water supply is used for bathing and washing purposes, while most residents use only packaged drinking water (can water) for drinking. The TCN@CAG team observed overflows from the sewage lines near the unoccupied blocks.

PDS shops:

There is no ration shop functional in the Perumbakkam resettlement colony yet. While 3 buildings have been designated for PDS shops, they are yet to open. Meanwhile residents are forced to travel to Semmenchery to buy rations.

Hospitals and Health Facilities:

There is no public hospital, primary health centre, or other government health facility in the resettlement colony. The only government health facility in the vicinity is a PHC at Semmenchery which caters to the residents of Semmenchery resettlement colony, built to accommodate 6734 families, and is already overburdened.

Schools and Anganwadis:

Only 1 Government Higher Secondary School and 2 Anganwadis have been started in the Perumbakkam resettlement colony so far. The school and the Anganwadi do not have separate buildings and function from rooms on the ground floor of one of the blocks which is being used as a school.

Through this preliminary enquiry we found that the facilities provided by the government at the Perumbakkam resettlement colony are very inadequate. The residents have no access to health and education, and have to go to Semmenchery even to get monthly rations. They complained that despite the absence of most basic amenities that they are entitled to, they have to pay Rs 750 per month to the TNSCB as maintenance charge and Rs.50 per month for the residents' welfare board.