

LIFE ON THE MARGINS

*Access to Basic Infrastructure Facilities in
the Resettlement Sites of Chennai*

February 2022

**INFORMATION AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR THE
DEPRIVED URBAN COMMUNITIES - IRCDUC**



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Research Team: Anugraha T, Behara Naga Sai Usha Gayatri, Elakkiya N K, Hannah Ruth Rachel, Jenifer Jone, Mohideen Ameer A, Priyadharshini S, Rohini Dikshit, Sakthi Kumar D, Saravapriya G, Sr. Shoba Kulu, Sivadershini S, Sruthi S, and Supriya T.

Editors: Dr. Nundiyny A D, Joel Shelton Terrance F, and Vanessa Peter

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Contact Details:

Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities

No 42, Second Floor, Third Street

MS Nagar, Chetpet

Chennai - 600 031

Tamil Nadu, India

<https://ircduc.org>

ircduc.chennai@gmail.com

+91 9941537581

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We hope that this study will spread awareness on the issues of resettlement and help the affected persons to achieve justice and restitution for the violation of their human rights.

Dr. A. D. Nundiyny, Joel Shelton Terrance F, and Vanessa Peter

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Acronyms and Abbreviations:

AIR	All India Radio
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
CMDA	Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority
CRRT	Chennai River Restoration Trust
ETRP	Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction Project
FPS	Fair Price Shops
GCC	Greater Chennai Corporation
GoTN	Government of Tamil Nadu
ICRERP	Integrated Cooum River Eco-restoration Project
NGO	Non-government Organization
R&R	Resettlement and Rehabilitation
SHG	Self Help Groups
TNUHDB	Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board
TNSUDP	Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project

LIFE ON THE MARGINS

Access to Basic Infrastructure Facilities in the Resettlement Sites of Chennai

1. Overview of Resettlement of Deprived Urban Communities in Chennai

Forced eviction and resettlement of urban deprived communities from their settlement is common across the country, and Tamil Nadu is no exception. The state, especially in Chennai and Coimbatore, is known for its massive resettlement sites for the urban poor located in the margins of the city.

One of the first resettlement projects constructed in Chennai was in Kodungaiyur (Located in North Chennai) near the dumping ground and in Velachery (South Chennai) which is a low-lying area. The resettlement site constructed in late 90's was in Kannagi Nagar located in the Information Technology (IT) Corridor in Kanchipuram District (now in Chennai District). This massive resettlement site was constructed in phases in a low-lying marsh land near the banks of Buckingham Canal in Kanchipuram District. Most of the resettlement sites constructed till date are either in low-lying areas in the paths of flood or in isolated and remote locations not accessible by the resettled families.

In the last two decades, 61,432 families (2.5 lakh individuals) from Chennai residing in settlements inside the city were forcibly evicted and resettled in eight resettlement sites located in the peripheral areas of the city.

S.No	District	Name of the relocation settlement	Total number of tenements constructed by TNSCB
1	Chennai	Kannagi Nagar - Okkiyum Thoraipakkam	23,704
2	Chennai	Semmenchery	5,164
3	Chengalpattu	Perumbakkam	20376
4	Kancheepuram	Navalur - Oragadam	2,048
5	Chennai	HLL Nagar - Thondiarpeth	1260
6	Chennai	All India Radio (AIR) Land	5,856
7	Thiruvallur	Gudapakkam - Thirumazhisai	1,024
8	Thiruvallur	Athipattu - Ambathur	2,000
Total			61,432

Ever since Chennai witnessed the destructive floods in December 2015, the city has witnessed one of the most massive eviction drives carried out for ‘conservation of water bodies’ and ‘providing disaster resilient housing’ for the vulnerable communities. 18,723 families comprising of nearly 75,000 individuals from 69 settlements were evicted and resettled in the sites of Perumbakkam, Ezhil Nagar/Kannagi Nagar, Navalur, Gudapakkam, AIR Site, and Athipattu from 2015-2020.

Name of the Resettlement Site	Number of families resettled from 2015-2020
Ezhil Nagar/Kannagi Nagar	2516
Perumbakkam	12045
Navalur	901
All India Radio (AIR) Site	178
Gudapakkam	775
Athipattu	1772
No Resettlement	90
Proximate Resettlement	446
Total	18723

Of the 18,723 families resettled 90 families were not provided with alternative housing and only 446 families were resettled in a proximate location.

Analysis of forced evictions carried out from 2015 to 2020 in Chennai:

- 96% of the evictions were carried out for restoration of water bodies
- Of the 69 settlements evicted, 60 settlements (88%) were evicted during the middle of the academic year
- Of the 69 settlements evicted from 2015 and 2020, only in 5 settlements process like Social Impact Assessments and Resettlement Action Plans were prepared prior to the evictions.
- 64 settlements did not have any consultation prior to the eviction
- 99% of the settlements evicted (68 settlements) did not receive legal notices

On 1 March 2010, in a meeting convened by the Chief Secretary, Government of Tamil Nadu (GoTN), regarding infrastructure facilities to be provided in Okkiyum Thoraipakkam (Kannagi Naagar), Semmenchery, and Perumbakkam by Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB), erstwhile Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB), the Principal Secretary to Government, Home Department had stated, ***“This kind of concentration of slum population in one place is not desirable and the future programme should ensure that they are more distributed and there is a mixed development.”*** He requested that smaller

amounts of land should be provided to TNUHDB for rehabilitation and resettlement scheme at different places.¹

Despite acknowledging the pitfalls of the existing resettlement practices, Government of Tamil Nadu continued to expand the resettlement site of Perumbakkam (1,152 houses) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge – India and is also completing construction of 6,877 tenements near the Ennore Thermal Power Plant. In Ennore, 26.68 acre of land of the Tamil Nadu Housing Board was reclassified from ‘Special and Hazardous Industrial Use Zone’ to ‘Residential Zone’ by the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA) on 14 November 2018 even though the representative from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board expressed his concern on the possible pollution due to the nearby Thermal Station and its impact on the proposed residential development.²

In the meeting convened by the Chief Secretary in 2010, Managing Director of TNUHDB had pointed out that, ***“There is a need for service delivery; otherwise, it brings a bad name to the government and renders the entire process infructuous given that these people are the most disadvantaged sections who have been deprived of their livelihood and also have been moved out of their homes from the city”.***³

A high-level committee headed by the Chief Secretary to Government with Secretaries to Government as members was formed in 2011⁴ based on the request from the Managing Director, TNUHDB. This committee was set up to resolve issues pertaining to basic amenities and social infrastructure in the resettlement sites.

Though meetings were conducted to address the issues in the resettlement sites, discussions with the resettled families reveals that they continue have limited access to basic amenities.

Therefore, IRCDUC has initiated this assessment in five resettlement sites to study the living conditions of the resettled families in these sites and to propose specific recommendations to address the critical issues of resettlement in these settlements and to further strengthen the Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) Policy evolved by the government.

¹ Minutes of the meeting held by the Chief Secretary in the Chief Secretary’s conference hall, at 3:30 p.m. on 1 March 2010.

² Agenda Item No. 4.29: Chennai Metropolitan Area – Master Plan – Variation to Land Use – Proposal for Reclassification of land use – Recommendation of Technical Committee meeting held on 2 January 2018.

³ Supra note 1

⁴ Government Order Number 117, Housing and Urban Development Department, dated 26 August 2011

2. Description of the Sites

Perumbakkam:

The Perumbakkam resettlement site is located in the Perumbakkam Village Panchayat of Chengalpattu District, behind the older resettlement colony of Semmenchery, and about 10 kilometers away from the other older resettlement site of Kannagi Nagar. Nearly 20,000 of the 23,864 tenement units proposed by TNUHDB are currently occupied. There are 158 blocks with 8 floors each with a lift facility.

The occupants of this site consists of:

- i. Project-affected families (PAFs) who were residing at the site prior to the construction of tenements;
- ii. Families shifted from the banks of Adyar River in Chennai and Kancheepuram District after the 2015 floods;
- iii. Families shifted from the banks of Cooum River in Chennai under the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project (ICRERP) of the Chennai Rivers Restoration Trust (CRRT)
- iv. Families from other 'objectionable' locations evicted under various projects;
- v. Families shifted under the World Bank-funded Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project (TNSUDP)

The site monthly maintenance fee collected by the Slum Clearance Board in Perumbakkam is Rs. 750, significantly higher than in other resettlement sites (because of lift facility).

Semmenchery:

Semmenchery comprises of 5,164 houses and it is located near the resettlement site of Perumbakkam in Ward No. 200, Zone 15 of Greater Chennai Corporation. (GCC). Most of the families resettled in these sites were evicted and resettled from the coastal areas of Chennai after tsunami struck the shores of Tamil Nadu.

Gudapakkam:

Gudapakkam resettlement site is located in Gudapakkam Village Panchayat in Thiruvallur District, at a distance of 14 km from the Poonamallee Bus Stand and nearly 2 kilometres from the Pudhuchattram bus stop on the Thiruvallur High Road.

This place is located in between Thirumazhisai and Thiruvallur. It is nearly 500 meters away from Thiruvallur High Road. There are 1024 tenements in this site comprising of nearly 770 families shifted from settlements like MSP Nagar, Om Sakthi Nagar located in the banks of Cooum River. This settlement is 32.4 kilometres from Aminjikarai, from where over 200 families were resettled.

Gudapakkam comprises 1024 houses, in 32 G+2 blocks with 32 houses per block. Each house measures around 340 sq. ft. There is a bedroom, living room, kitchen and bathroom. The houses have been fitted with piped water and electricity.

Nearly 1000 of the 1024 tenements built in this site are occupied, including 176 allotted to Sri Lankan repatriate families by TNUHDB in 2017, and families resettled under the World Bank funded World Bank-funded TNSDUP.

Navalur:

The resettlement site of Navalur is in Serapanancheri Village Panchayat near Padapai, on the Tambaram-Walajabad Road, around 55 kilometers away from the city. There are 2048 houses in this settlement.

Nearly 900 residents from Muthumariamman Koil Nagar, Indira Nagar and MGR Colony settlements located near Arumbakkam, Aminjikai were evicted under ICRERP of CRRT in the year 2017. There are also families shifted from other water bodies from districts other than Chennai, who are relocated to Navalur but did not benefit from any R&R component.

AIR Site:

Of the 5,856 tenements in AIR Site located in Thiruvottiyur in Chennai District, 3616 tenements are World Bank funded under the Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction Project (ETRP). 253 transwomen were also allotted houses in this settlement. After Chennai floods. Nearly 170 tenements were allotted to families evicted from the banks of Cooum River under ICRERP of CRRT.

3. The Process and Methodology

The objective of this assessment was to examine and understand the issues faced by the resettled families in the sites of Perumbakkam, Semmenchery, Gudapakkam, Navalur, and AIR Site. A team of student researchers trained by IRCDUC, were involved in field investigation, along with community leaders from the settlement, to identify both site-specific and common issues faced by the residents of these resettlement sites.

- Desk research and evolving a matrix for assessment: The team of researchers were engaged in analyzing the existing research on these settlements and evolved a data sheet for analyzing the existing living conditions of these families. The matrix was evolved to assess the existing infrastructure facilities, the functional and non-functional facilities, the gaps, and the requirements.
- Discussion with community leaders: To understand the overall issues faced by the residents in these settlements, the research team had a brief discussion with the community leaders.

- **Transect Walk:** The researchers walked across the settlement along with the community leaders to assess the living conditions and the availability of basic infrastructure facilities like schools, anganwadi centres (AWCs), Fair Price Shops (FPS), playground/parks, Primary Health Centre (PHCs), burial ground, police station etc., They observed and documented the findings of the transect walk.
- **Interviews and Discussion with Residents:** During the transect walk the research team also interviewed the residents from the neighbouring blocks and had group discussion with women to discuss on safety issues. The researchers were also invited by the residents to visit their houses to document the issues related to the quality of housing in the settlements.
- **Interviews with officials:** The researchers had a brief discussion with the TNUHDB officials who were present in the settlements and were willing to talk.

4. Findings of the Assessment

Quality of Houses:

In the resettlement sites of Perumbakkam, Semmenchery, and AIR Land, people had several concerns about the quality of houses provided for them, as the buildings were found to be damp throughout the year and the plasters were found to be crumbling.

The walls remain damp in some of the houses in AIR settlement throughout the year. There are issues of plasters crumbling.



Image 1: Damp Walls in AIR Site



Image 2: Cracked Walls in Semmenchery

The houses in Semmenchery have cracks in the wall. Some of the houses were found to be so damp that it has damaged the electrical wiring, resulting in electrical shocks and damaging their appliances. The residents complained that the ceilings were damp, and they fear that the roof will collapse.



Image 3: Damp Walls in Semmenchery



Image 4: Damp Walls in Perumbakkam



Image 5: Damp Ceiling in Perumbakkam



Image 6: Damp walls have affected electrical wiring resulting in electrical shock

Some families in Navalur also pointed out that their houses were damp and leaking throughout the year.

In Perumbakkam, Semmenchery, and AIR Site, people pointed out that there was no response from the TNUHDB for complaints regarding damp walls. Some families in Perumbakkam pointed out that the contractors have done repair work in their houses, but the issue of damp walls has not been addressed. In Perumbakkam, people point out that some blocks in the old phase like (K, L, S etc.,) are in poor conditions. They point out that the walls are damp and cracked, flooring is damaged both inside the houses and outside, water pipelines are

leaking, and there is a need for lights in the stairways as it is unsafe for women and children after dark.

Education & Nutrition

Anganwadi Centres (AWCs)

In the settlements of Semmenchery and All India Radio Site, there was no specific complaints regarding the functioning of AWCS. In AIR Site, there are 9 AWCs and one of the major concerns is the non-availability of water in the AWC centres.

There is only one AWC located inside the Gudapakkam tenement. The Anganwadi teacher at Gudapakkam tenement is also in charge of an Anganwadi in the nearby locality and she is unable to provide services in both the centers. As only the helper was available, she finds it difficult to take care of the children. Discussion with mothers reveal that they visit Anganwadi at noon to feed their children. In the settlement of Navalur out of the 4 AWCs, only 2 are functional. The residents want all the 4 AWCs to be functional.



Image 7: AWC in Gudapakkam



Image 8: Nonfunctional AWC in Navalur

In Perumbakkam, people in the new phase, especially in the tail-end of the settlement expressed the need for setting up more AWCs (near their blocks) in the settlement.

Schools:

In all the resettlement sites, except for Semmenchery and Perumbakkam, children are continuing to face difficulties in accessing higher secondary school education. There are glaring gaps in setting up schools in proportion to the population. While the resettlement site of Semmenchery with 5,164 tenements have three schools, Perumbakkam with a total population of over 20,376 families also has six functional schools and All India Radio site with 5,856 tenements has only 1 school inside the settlement.

In AIR site and Navalur, the residents pointed out that children drop out of schools after high school primarily because of non-availability of higher secondary

schools in the vicinity. Children being evicted in the middle of academic year is yet another reason for school dropouts.

In AIR site, only one School is available till 8th class. The children are accessing schools located in places like Ajax, Wimco, and Burma Nagar. The existing school in AIR is said to be well maintained and provides both Tamil and English medium education. The school washroom has sanitary pad dispensers and awareness on how to use the same was also provided for the girls. Discussion with the school authorities reveal that the school requires an additional toilet for girls, and they are unable to construct it due to non-availability of funds though there is space available for construction. Discussion with parents reveal that children are often chided by the teachers and are referred as 'children from resettlement sites'. There is a need for sensitizing teachers employed in this school. Discussions with children reveal that they need a library and a sports ground with sports training in this settlement.

In Semmenchery, there are three government schools (Primary, High and Higher Secondary School). The schools have both Tamil and English medium of instruction. The infrastructure of the school is better than the schools in the other resettlement sites. However, discussion with parents and children reveal that the washrooms are not maintained properly as there is no adequate water facility. There are no bins available for disposal of sanitary napkins. The sanitary disposal mechanism present in the school at AIR site can be replicated in the school in Semmenchery and Perumbakkam. The government college located inside Perumbakkam is also useful for the children from Semmenchery.

In Navalur, community leaders expressed concern that some of the children are found to be working as child labourers in a biscuit factory nearby. As there are no higher secondary schools nearby, children are dropping out of the schools during the pandemic. Many parents claim that there are only 5 teachers appointed for the high school. They pointed out that because of absence of higher secondary school in the vicinity and with limited transportation facility, children who write the board examinations faced several challenges. Lack of transportation facility became a bigger challenge, especially when examination centres were allotted in different schools far from the settlement. The only college in the surroundings is the Krishna Arts College which does not offer different streams.

In Perumbakkam, there are six functional schools (Primary (4), High (1), and Higher Secondary schools (1)). Construction work of one additional school is completed while it is yet to be functional, and another school is under construction.

One of the primary schools is currently functioning (verified on 1 Feb 2022) in one of the residential blocks in 4 houses. Discussion with the teachers reveal that the school building is already constructed and will be functional in the next academic year. However, this issue has been raised several times, including to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and the school is continuing to function in the tenement that does not have adequate lighting and ventilation.



Image9: School functioning inside a tenement in Perumbakkam



Image 10: School in Navalur

Fair Price Shops (FPS):

The functioning of FPS has several issues in most of the settlements, other than Semmenchery. The residents of Semmenchery have reported that the FPS are sufficient, timely, and provide all essential commodities.

In Perumbakkam, the settlement has 8 Fair Price Shops. Discussion with the residents reveal that shop number 3 (located in old phase) do not often provide them with the products they are entitled to, stating non availability of products as the reason. The staff in shop no 5 (located near block number 13) is rude to those who avail services from this shop.

In Gudapakkam, the FPS functions only three days in a month. The residents are not provided prior information about the dates when the shop will be open. The residents point out that there should be an increase in the number of days and timing of the FPS. Palm oil is not available in the shop. Discussion with the Sri Lankan repatriates in the site reveals that they do not receive the specified number of products, and the residents are verbally abused by the staff in the FPS. The residents are forced to form a queue in front of the shop from morning to evening.

The residents in this settlement have filed several complaints but no action has been taken till date. Residents strongly feel that information on helpline/complaint numbers should be made available in a common place in the settlement. Each block can have a representative who will receive prior intimation of the shop opening. There must also be an association for PDS in the area through whom the issues regarding ration shops can be taken to the higher authorities.

In AIR site, there are two functioning FPS. A newly constructed FPS is yet to be functional. The families shifted under the ICRERP recently face challenges in changing the address proof to the current location.

In Navalur, the FPS is open only five days in a month, and the residents have requested government for increase in working days. Out of two shops, only one is functioning and the other has several supply issues and is often overcrowded. The residents point out that the staff in the FPS is behaving rudely with the residents and is not providing many of the products that they are entitled to.



Image 11: FPS in Gudapakkam



Image 12: FPS in Navalur

Canteens/Unavagams:

Amma Unavagam is currently functioning in Semmenchery. The residents of AIR Site, Navalur and Perumbakkam pointed out that they need Kalaingar Canteens in their settlements. As many of them continue to remain unemployed, access to subsidized food will help them to meet the food requirements of the family.

Health

Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs) & Maternity Care

In Gudapakkam, because of an unresolved dispute between the residents and the doctor, the doctor does not visit the PHC regularly. The residents in this settlement are alleged to have damaged the PHC building and the doctor's vehicle. At present, the doctor is not available most of the time to meet the immediate needs of patients, and the residents are forced to go to the PHC in Nemam (located 4.5 kms away from this settlement) even during emergency situations. Sometimes the residents also travel to Kilpauk Medical College Hospital in Chennai District. The nurse only visits the clinic for three days to provide medicines and the emergency ambulance is stationed in the PHC. As this settlement is in an interior area, the residents point out that they need a 24-hour clinic with a pharmacy.

In AIR site, the PHC is functional. However, the doctors are not available in the PHC after 3 pm. There is no obstetrics unit or maternity care in the PHC, and pregnant women are diverted to other hospitals for check-ups and delivery. The residents point out that the PHC is functioning better since the pandemic. The Makkalai Thedi Maruthuvam scheme is being implemented in the area with trained volunteers. It was observed that many residents from all age groups have

skin infections, and residents in the site point out that the quality of water is poor and hence they are developing frequent skin infections.

In Navalur, the PHC is not functional. As the site is in a remote location, the ambulances are unable to reach the tenements on time. The residents have requested the government to provide the PHC with maternity care units for the last four years, but the issue remains unresolved.

In Perumbakkam, the residents are hesitant to use the PHC as the doctor is not available most of the time and the assistant is treating the patients. The PHCs in Semmenchery and Perumbakkam have the instruments and a delivery room with beds, but no gynecologist is assigned and hence for delivery, women from Semmenchery are referred to Kannagi Nagar CHC (located in another resettlement site comprising of over 23,000 houses) and women from Perumbakkam are referred to Chengalpattu Government Hospital (45 kms). For scans, pregnant women are referred either to Medavakkam or Tambaram, for which there is no direct bus route.

The residents in Semmechery point out that the services in the PHC inside this settlement used to be better. However, in the recent past, the doctors are not available on a regular basis and in their absence, nurses are prescribing medicines for the patients. Ambulance facilities are available, but they do not arrive promptly during emergencies. Maternity care is only available on alternative days and there is no gynecologist in this PHC. People do not get first aid services promptly and people are not treated post afternoons. The doctor in the PHC had responded to the researcher insisting on the need for more helpers and nurses in the PHC.



Image 13: PHC in AIR Site (Interior)



Image 14: PHC in AIR Site (Exterior)



Image 15: PHC in Semmenchery



Image 16: PHC in Gudapakkam



Image 17: PHC in Perumbakkam

Water, Sanitation, and Waste Management

In AIR site, Navalur, and Perumbakkam, access to clean drinking water is a major concern. Leaking water pipeline is an issue in Gudapakkam and Perumbakkam. In all these sites, people procure water cans for drinking. In AIR site and Perumbakkam many residents suffer from skin infections because of the poor quality of water. In AIR Site, Navalaur and Perumbakkam, people specifically complained that the water tanks did not have lids. In Navalur, as water in overhead tanks are filled only on alternative days, they buy water from the neighbouring areas for drinking and other purposes. They have requested TNUHDB to install handpumps for each block to have access to water. The

residents also complained that they are unable to access the terrace and hence they are unable to clean or maintain the tanks.

Blocked drains, poor garbage collection and disposal is a problem in almost all the settlements. AIR site and semmenchery is comparatively better than the other sites in the aspect of garbage disposal and collection mechanism as these sites are within GCC limits.



Image 18: AIR Site - Block 77



Image 19: No garbage disposal system in Gudapakkam

There is no proper garbage disposal mechanism in Gudapakkam, the garbage is dumped near the blocks or in open spaces within the settlement and in the road. In Navalur, the bins that are placed inside the settlement is in poor condition.



Image 20 & 21: Broken bins in Navalur

Stagnant drain water because of broken pipelines, blocks, and storm water drains without covers is a rampant problem in Perumbakkam.



Image 22 to 27: Open Drains in Perumbakkam

Common Spaces:

In AIR Site the parks are not well-maintained and discussion with the residents reveal that men occupy these spaces, and it has become a place for substance abuse. There is a space allotted for police boys club in this settlement.

In Semmenchery, the parks are not well-maintained, and the play materials are damaged and broken and are not replaced. Discussion with children reveal that they are interested in sports and there is no space or guidance provided for them.

In Perumbakkam, the parks are not maintained well and discussion with children in Perumbakkam and Semmenchery reveal that a sports training and related infrastructure facilities like ground can be set up in these settlements.

In Perumbakkam, Gudapakkam, and Navalur, the residents do not have community halls. In these settlements the community halls are either used for other purposes or remains closed. In Gudapakkam, the centre is open only when the officials visit the place. In Navalur, the livelihood centre remains closed and there is no community hall in this settlement. In AIR site, the community hall is used for training and other purposes.



Image 28: Police Boys Club in AIR Site



Image 29: Unused Livelihood Centre in Navalur



Image 30: Community Hall in Gudapakkam remains closed

In Semmenchery, cremation and burial is also carried out in this place and residents point out that there is no adequate space for burial of the deceased persons.



Image 31: Cremation/Burial Ground in Semmenchery

In Perumbakkam, the cremation ground does not provide burial facility as this is a marsh land.

The residents in the settlement have heard that there were instances when corpses were found to be floating after burial in this site and hence, they do not prefer to use this place. There is no proper path leading to the cremation ground in Perumbakkam. In Navalur, there is no burial ground in the vicinity.



Image 32 and 33: Cremation ground in Perumbakkam and the path leading to it

Semmenchery, Perumbakkam, and Gudapakkam residents have access to e-sevai centers.

Road and Transportation

Roads:

Of the five resettlement sites, Gudapakkam and Navalur are in remote locations that are not well connected. In Gudapakkam, the roads approaching the settlement from the main road and the roads inside the settlement are uneven and riddled with potholes. The potholes are big enough in size that a small child can fall into the pothole, which has happened in the past. This makes commuting, especially at nighttime, extremely risky. Moreover, over the years, the numbers of potholes have increased. The approach roads to the settlements and the roads within are very uneven with bumps at frequent junctions, making it difficult for people and vehicles to move. Sometimes, the vehicles must be stopped at a place and the people must proceed on foot to their destination.



Image 34: Roads inside Gudapakkam Settlement



Image 35 and 36: Roads inside Perumbakkam

The streets in between the blocks in Perumbakkam are poorly maintained. The roads are bumpy and damp, even during summer. They need new pavements and maintenance.



Image 37: Roads inside Perumbakkam

In Semmenchery, there is a bus terminus available inside the settlement, the residents expressed that there should be more buses in the peak hours (morning and evening), as the buses are extremely crowded during peak hours. They also expressed the need for having special buses for women and children. Those in Perumbakkam also access the buses in the Semmenchery resettlement site. The resettled families in Perumbakkam point out that there are no bus stands inside the settlement. As the settlement is huge, they expressed the need at least two bus stands inside the settlement with a bus shelter. Currently in Perumbakkam, two exclusive buses for the school students are being operationalised. The buses at times do not halt in Perumbakkam and the children miss the bus and reach schools late.

Many in Gudapakkam continue to travel to the city for work (nearly 45 kms one way). They have expressed the need for more bus connectivity from their site to the main road during the peak hours. Only two buses ply from Navalur to Tambaram Railway stations and these buses do not follow regular timings. The residents feel that the frequency of the buses should be increased especially during the peak hours, or minibuses should be introduced to connect the settlement to the main road. In both these settlements, the residents strongly expressed that there should be special buses for children and women during the peak hours, as children are using bus services to access higher secondary and college education.

Livelihood, Employment and Vocational Training

In all the five settlements, residents complained that women over 40 years are not provided job opportunities and they are not included in the vocational training or job fairs being conducted. In all these sites, because of lack of transportation connectivity, non-availability jobs in the vicinity, lack of safety in the settlement, women depend on men for their transportation and their mobility is highly restricted.

In Navalur, people are employed in the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme have alleged that they do not receive the payments on time, nor do they receive 100 days of work. In Navalur, some of them are employed in a biscuit company in the locality.

In Gudapakkam, as the settlement is in a remote location and the surrounding areas thrive on rural based employment, the resettled families find it difficult to access employment. Most people in Gudapakkam are daily wage workers, of which the men are engaged in painting, carpeting, electricians, and women in domestic work. Most of them spend a large sum of their income on travel expenses. In this settlement too, men and women above 40 are being denied employment opportunities in the nearby areas.

Some families have resorting to self-employment, and this is evident in the number of small shops that are functioning inside the settlements both in roads and inside the tenements. Petty shops, tea shops and tiffin shops, have mushroomed in the settlements.

In AIR settlement, the researchers had a detailed discussion with transpersons. 230 transpersons are residing in these tenements. Though some of them are employed, others find it difficult to avail employment in this area.

Vocational Training:

In all the settlements, some women have benefited from vocational training in the initial days after resettlement. Discussions with women reveal that the women were issued certificate after the training, but there was no effort to convert these trainings into an income generation activity. They do not have the finances to start small businesses or marketing linkage for their products.

Under the National Urban Livelihood Mission, there are many Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed in these settlements. Discussion with women reveal that they only benefit from the revolving funds through these groups and these groups do not enhance their livelihood or prospects of employment. However, formation of SHGs is one of the predominant measures for addressing livelihood for women in the post-resettlement period by the Government.

Safety

Safety is a major concern in all the resettlement sites. In Gudapakkam and Navalur, both the settlements are in remote areas and people do not venture out in night because of safety issues. In these settlements, women and girls are not found to be outside at late evening because of fear of being harassed. Both these settlements also complain of rampant drug peddling inside the settlements.

In Navalur, the residents pointed out that the settlement was well lit whereas in Gudapakkam, it is not the case. In Navalur, there is a police booth, and the police visit the settlement from Padapai only when there are any issues. The people do not feel safe inside the settlements. In both these sites, the residents are expressing the need for setting up functional police booths.

In Perumbakkam, there has been several instances of bikes being set on fire. Despite several complaints, the issue has not been addressed. In Perumbakkam, the police station functions on the ground floor of one of the blocks. There are many unsafe spots in the site as there are no adequate streetlights. The women in Perumbakkam and Semmenchery have been demanding for All Women Police Station (AWPS) in the area as the nearest AWPS is in Madipakkam and there is no transportation facility from Perumbakkam to Madipakkam.

In all the five settlements, addiction among teenage boys was identified as one of the major concerns. Abuse is also an issue faced by girls and women in all these settlements, especially after they return from schools, colleges, or places of work.

Grievance Redressal Systems

In AIR site, during the visit of the researchers to the Maintenance/Complaints office of the TNUHDB, the officers assured them that all complaints other than electricity will be addressed by this office. The officers assured the research team that plumbers and other technicians will be sent to their houses to address issues such as broken pipes, damp walls, and other maintenance work. However, women in the settlement pointed out that they had to approach the officers several times before any work is addressed.

The researchers also observed that the officers were reluctant to accept written complaints from people. While two women approached them about a broken pipeline issue, one of the officers said that the plumber was on leave for an entire week, and they were asked to come again after a week. Discussion with the complainants reveal that these women have been approaching the officers for the three weeks and neither their complaints were received, nor any action was taken. After the intervention of the researchers, the officers finally accepted the written complaints from the women.

In Perumbakkam and Semmenchery, women have reached out to concerned officials, but issues related to damp walls, damp ceiling, and leaking houses are not addressed promptly. There have been many instances of protests taken up

by women in front of the TNUHDB office in the settlement for water during the pandemic situation.

In Gudapakkam and Navalur, people feel distanced from TNUHDB as they are not able to reach out to the officers with complaints.

Sale Deeds

In AIR Site and Gudapakkam, discussion with PAFs of World Bank-funded project like TNSUDP and ETRP reveals that they have not been issued sale deeds. Families who were shifted from the coastal areas as part of the tsunami recovery project are yet to receive the sale deeds.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The limited access to basic infrastructure facilities, especially during the pandemic has increased the existing vulnerabilities of the communities who are grappling with the adverse impact of resettlement. To provide immediate restitution for the resettled families, IRCDUC proposes the following discussion based on the findings of our assessment.

Overall Recommendations:

- Government of Tamil Nadu should ensure that the High-level Committee formed in 2011 to resolve issues pertaining to basic amenities and social infrastructure facilities in resettlement sites (Government Order Number 117, Housing and Urban Development Department, dated 26 August 2011) should be made functional and scope should be expanded to the following settlements:
 - Perumbakkam
 - Semmenchery
 - Kannagi Nagar
 - Navalur
 - Gudapakkam
 - HLL Land
 - AIR Site
 - Athipattu
- To immediately set up grievance redress meetings (along with the relevant line departments) in the resettlement sites to address the pressing issues.
- Government of Tamil Nadu should not evict settlements in the middle of the academic year
- Proximate resettlement should be practiced as restoration of livelihood continues to be a challenge even in settlements that has been existing for over 5 years
- Social infrastructure components to be included in the DPR of resettlement housing projects and all facilities should be available prior to resettlement

■ **Quality of Houses**

- There is a need to assess the quality of the houses in all these settlements (especially tenements that continue to remain damp for years and are now having cracks, like buildings in Old Phase of Perumbakkam, AIR, Semmenchery etc.,)

■ **Sale Deeds**

- Sale deeds to be issued for families who are beneficiaries of free housing especially under ETRP and ICRERP

■ **Education and Nutrition**

- To ensure that all the 4 AWCs should be made functional in Navalur
- The teacher in the AWC in Gudapakkam is currently managing two centres, to ensure recruitment of teacher for the center in Gudapakkam
- Additional AWCs near the tail-end blocks of Perumbakkam
- To ensure full-time FPS in Gudapakkam and Navalur. To make the other FPS functional in Navalur
- The newly constructed FPS in AIR Site to be made functional
- Camps for change of name in Ration Card and Aadhar to be conducted in all the sites (in Perumbakkam it was conducted recently but Rs. 50 is charged for the same).
- To ensure that FPS staffs in resettlement sites are instructed to treat communities with respect
- To start Kalaingar Canteens in all the resettlement sites, can be explored as a livelihood option for women in these settlements
- To ensure that the schools in Perumbakkam are made functional, the primary school functioning inside the tenement should be shifted at the earliest.
- To ensure access to higher secondary schools in Gudapakkam, Navalur and AIR Site
- Additional Higher Secondary School required in Perumbakkam

■ **Health**

- To ensure functional 24*7 PHCs in all the settlements with doctors and nurses
- To set up obstetrics unit in the PHC inside or nearest to the resettlement sites
- Doctors should be available in the PHC in Gudapakkam, AIR Site and Perumbakkam. In Gudapakkam the nurse visits the PHC only 3 days a week the PHC should be made functional daily
- The practice of nurses or other workers prescribing medicines should be stopped in the PHCs in Perumbakkam and Gudapakkam

■ **Water, Sanitation and Waste Management**

- Need to ensure clean water in AIR Site, Navalur and Perumbakkam
- Garbage disposal mechanisms should be in place in Navalur and Gudapakkam
- Open drain issues, leaking pipes, and blocked drains to be addressed in Perumbakkam

■ **Common Spaces**

- In all these sites, play areas for children to be maintained with play materials, sports grounds with sports training to be explored.
- Need for community halls in Navalur and Perumbakkam
- In Gudapakkam the community hall is open only when officials visit the area, the hall should be made available
- Need for burial grounds in Semmenchery and Perumbakkam
- The path leading to the burial ground in Perumbakkam should be cleared and made

■ **Road and Transportation**

- The approach road to Navalur and Gudapakkam to be repaired and there is a need for better connectivity to main road.
- Roads inside the settlement in Gudapakkam and Perumbakkam to be repaired
- Bus services increased in Navalur, Gudapakkam, Semmenchery and Perumbakkam during peak time
- Bus stands in Perumbakkam
- Women and children special buses in Navalur, Gudapakkam, Semmenchery and Perumbakkam during the peak hours
- The conductors in the special buses for children in Perumbakkam to be instructed to stop in Perumbakkam and wait for children to board

■ **Livelihood, Employment and Vocational Training**

- Vocational training programmes should have a follow-up strategy to ensure employability and income generation. Credit linkages to start new business and marketing support should be made available
- To link schemes available under the Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation (TAHDCO) especially for self-employment schemes. Special camps and resource centres could be established
- Special camps to enroll people in Labour Welfare Boards to be organized in these settlements
- Unemployed people above 40 years who do not get employment to be linked with rural and urban employment guarantee scheme.

■ Safety

- To ensure that Gudapakkam, and Perumbakkam have adequate streetlights especially in all the dark spots of the settlements
- Police outposts to be functional in Navalur and Gudapakkam
- De-addiction support programmes to be made available in all these settlements
- Regular programmes by Police Department to spread awareness on Kavalan App and on safety of women and girls to be organized
- Neighbourhood Child Protection Committees as mandated in the Tamil Nadu State Policy for Children, 2022 should be formed in all the resettlement sites.
- All Women Police Station to be made available for Perumbakkam/Semmenchery