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Displaced slum-dwellers out on a limb for 17 days

Staff Report

144 families desperately seek temporary shelter.

Dozens of slum-dwellers from Laggere, who were recently displaced from their homes as part of a slum rejuvenation project, staged a protest outside the office of the Karnataka Slum Development Board here on Thursday demanding immediate relief.

Over a fortnight ago, bulldozers hired by the board razed 144 huts in the Lakshmidevi slum in Laggere, displacing at least 500 people. The demolition drive was part of a project funded by the JNNURM to replace the low-quality huts with multi-storeyed apartments for the poor.

However, even 17 days after being rendered homeless, they

have not been provided temporary shelter. Speaking on behalf of the protesters, A. Jyothi, State president of the National Federation of Indian Women, said the board contractors had been tasked with building 100 temporary sheds for the displaced. But they have only built 54, she said. “First, the contract should have been for 144 sheds. The least they [Slum Board] could have ensured is that the contractors finished the project in good time. How long does it take to set up 100 tin sheds,” she asked.

Poor quality

The protesters also complained that the quality of the sheds constructed was very poor. “The metal sheets [for the sheds] are corroded. They don’t look new,” said one woman. “They have been paid Rs. 16,600 per shed as per information we got under RTI,” Ms. Jyothi said, while alleging that the quality of the construction doesn’t reflect the money spent.

Others complained that basic facilities such as water and sanitation have not yet been provided. “There is only one plastic water tank for all of us. We are not able to use even this as the water tank has not been mounted. There is one toilet for every 15 huts,” said Ms. Jyothi. The board officials could

not be contacted for a response.