

The Deccan Chronicle □ 24.11.2010

Concrete houses for urban poor

Nov. 23: In yet another sop ahead of Assembly polls, the state government on Tuesday announced that huts with thatched roofs in urban areas would also be converted into concrete houses over and above the 18 lakh huts being taken up for conversion in the rural areas.

Chief minister M. Karunanidhi, who reviewed the progress of Kalaingar housing scheme at the secretariat, announced that the scheme would be extended to all town panchayats. The flagship scheme of the DMK regime will be taken up in hill towns such as Ooty and Kodaikanal as special case even if the huts are covered by tins or plastic sheets.

According to a senior official, at least 2 lakh hut-dwellers stand to benefit. The state will give a subsidy of `75,000 to each hut. Instead of awarding the construction work to the contractors, the hut-dwellers would be entrusted with the work. "A detailed survey will be taken up in all the town panchayats across the state and Kodaikanal and Ooty. The beneficiaries will be given identity cards," a government release said.

The team of officials from the rural development department, handled by deputy chief minister M.K. Stalin, got a pat from the CM for successfully completing the construction of 4,063 houses so far. Mr Karunanidhi said works have been progressing to convert 3 lakh huts as concrete tenements before January 2011. In a span of six years, all the 18 lakh identified huts would be converted to create a 'hut-free' Tamil Nadu.

As many as 13 districts, including Tirupur, Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Sivagangai, Madurai, Coimbatore and Karur, will be declared hut-free districts by January.