

The Deccan Chronicle 03.08.2010

TNHB stupor allows pvt realtors to call the shots

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Aug. 2: Even decades after its establishment, the Tamil Nadu Housing Board (TNHB) has largely preferred to keep off the race and let private players rule the roost in the realty sector. Tamil Nadu is one of the states with a huge demand for housing and the state board being off the pace is not helping the cause of meeting rising demand.

According to sources in the state planning commission, in 2001, out of the total shortage of 6.95 lakh housing units, 5.97 lakh were in the urban areas, accounting for 85 per cent. By the year 2012, the total housing demand is estimated at 26.27 lakh units, with the average annual demand working out to roughly 2 lakh each year.

Sources said, “More than two thirds of the households requiring housing fall in the lower income group (LIG) and economically weaker section (EWS) categories. These groups largely depend on rental housing provided by higher income group (HIG)

households.” Official sources admitted TNHB, which was supposed to cater to the housing needs of LIG, EWS and middle income group (MIG), had failed to live up to expectations.

Since its inception in 1961, TNHB has constructed only 3.95 lakh dwelling units across the state. Reason cited by the TNHB for not taking new projects in a big way is unsold stock of over 30,000 plot/flat and houses throughout the state. However, official sources said big plans are afoot. A senior TNHB official said the board had plans to enter into public private partnership with landowners to promote large housing projects. This partnership would help increase the supply of housing in the Chennai metropolitan area.

The official added that TNHB would also develop housing projects in joint venture with the cooperative housing department, apart from entering into joint ventures with the Chennai Metro Rail Ltd to develop the housing board’s own properties along the alignment of metro rail. The official said at least two projects were to be finalised this year.