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## Lack of will

The law-enforcing agencies display a lack of will in checking encroachments on the footpath.

Corporation officials say they need adequate support from the police, because once they conduct raids and seize the goods and articles, the shopkeepers return the next day.

M. Rakkappan, City Town Planning Officer, Madurai Corporation, agrees that there is large-scale violation in terms of encroachment of pavements but sought the help of the media to sensitise the public to claim their rights, and shopkeepers to understand the rights of pedestrians.

Though the district administration is keen to eradicate this scourge, it has not been successful because there is no proper coordination within the government agencies, he points out.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime and Traffic), K. Feroze Khan Abdullah, says that concerted efforts are being made to make the city more friendly to pedestrians. However, it is the licensed shopowners who violate and encroach upon the footpath space.

“We have set a target and each week we choose a street and clear encroachments to provide proper access to the footpath. Presently, we are involved in clearing North Masi Street of encroachments,” he said.

Mutual responsibility is needed among government agencies to protect the pedestrians’ right to footpath space, he stresses.