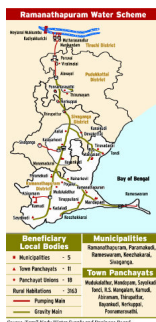


**Source : The Hindu      Date : 11.06.2009**

## Ramnad drinking water scheme inauguration today

T. Ramakrishnan *Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi will launch it through video co*



CHENNAI: The long-felt desire of the people of the drought-prone Ramanathapuram district for sustainable drinking water supply becomes a reality on Thursday with the inauguration of the Rs.616-crore Ramanathapuram combined drinking water supply scheme.

At the Secretariat, Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi will, through video conferencing, formally commission the scheme. Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin will participate in

a function at Ramanathapuram town and give away assistance to beneficiaries of various welfare schemes.

Though the difference between the average annual rainfall of the State (91 cm) and that of the Ramanathapuram district (83 cm) is not much, groundwater available in most places of the district at a depth beyond seven metres is saline.

The fresh water available dries up quickly within two-three months after northeast monsoon. As a result, the district has been suffering from acute water shortage in most part of the year.

This is why the need for a stable source has become crucial. As part of its efforts to solve the drinking water problem in Ramanathapuram, the government decided to tap the Cauvery water.

The combined drinking water supply scheme has been envisaged, providing 50 million litres a day (MLD) initially

and 100 MLD eventually. Apart from the entire Ramanathapuram district, wayside habitations of Sivaganga and Pudukottai districts are covered. Totally, five municipalities, 11 town panchayats and 3,163 rural habitations in 18 panchayat unions are covered. At present, the population of about 15.75 lakh in the three districts is covered. By 2036, the population will be 20 lakh.

Four collector wells across the river Cauvery in Tiruchi district – three near Mutharasanallur and one near Kadiyakurichi – have been constructed.

Water will be conveyed through 5,220-km-long pumping and gravity main lines. It will be collected in 119 sumps and 601 over head tanks and finally, distributed through 198-km-long distribution lines. In January 2007, Mr. Karunanidhi laid the foundation stone for the scheme, which was divided into eight packages.

## Contracts

Contracts for the packages were settled between March and September 2007. Against the normal duration of three years for the execution of a project of this size, the government directed the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board, the executing agency, to complete it in two years.

Even three months ahead of the stipulated period, the project has been completed, a senior official of the Board says, adding that Mr Stalin commenced a trial run of the project in February last.