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A crown of TWAD Board works

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Ramanathapuram combined water scheme has set records in several aspects

RAMANATHAPURAM: The Ramanathapuram Combined Water Supply Scheme, one of the largest rural water schemes in the country and the biggest water scheme in the State, has set records in several aspects, particularly use of pipes from the Cauvery riverbed in Tiruchi district and Dhanushkodi, one of the remote points of southern Tamil Nadu.

The TWAD Board, a Government agency supplying protected waters to several millions of people in the State, claims that the RCWSS is a crown to the TWAD Board considering its huge volume of cost, quick completion of the scheme, despite many adverse conditions and formation of supplying mains.

“Just imagine we are bringing water from Tiruchi, which is geographically located in central part of Tamil Nadu, to the remote areas such as Rameswaram, Sayalkudi etc., in Ramanathapuram, which is located in down south of Tamil Nadu. I feel it is a great achievement for the TWAD Board from its inception. We never gave up though we faced several difficulties while implementing the scheme,” Swaran Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, told *The Hindu*.

He said pipes had been laid to the length of whopping 5,418 km along main lines, streets, wards, lanes and others from Mutharasanallur to Rameswaram.

“We have covered every nook and corner of Ramanathapuram district. Not even a single hamlet has been left out. I have never come across such a kind of large scheme that too solving the several decades old drinking water crisis faced by over one million people of Ramanathapuram district,” Mr. Singh added.

PVC pipes

While PVC pipes have covered 4,615 km, pre-stressed concrete pipes have been laid along 438 km.

“When we planned to lay pipe to a record length, the companies producing pre stressed concrete pipes told us that they had not produced to this large requirement from their inception period. But we have made it happen,” he said.

Mr. Singh said it was not that the ground level implementing authorities and the four main contractors had faced no problem.

Unseasonal rain that hit the district for several times was the main impediment faced by them.

“The district is known for insufficient rainfall. But from the day we started the work, it has started receiving huge rain. It received 1492.6 mm in 2008 as against the average of just 827 mm. It slowed down the work in many areas. Otherwise we would have completed the work at least six months earlier,” he said.

The second biggest problem was in getting the no objection certificate from the National Highways Authorities of India (NHAI) that was mandatory for carrying pipe on the Pamban road bridge. The file could not be cleared by them for more than a year citing various reasons.

The authorities could finally get the permission, thanks to the special interest taken by the Deputy Chief Minister M.K. Stalin through the then Minister for Surface Transport T.R. Baalu.

