CHAPTER - V

PUBLIC WELFARE MEASURES
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During 1996-2006, many public welfare measures were implemented by the Chief Ministers M.Karunanidhi (1996-2001) and J.Jayalalitha (2001-2006). Among them, Anna Renaissance Scheme, Namakku Naame Thittam, Samathuvapuram, Uzhavar Santhai and Rain Water Harvest are worth mentioning.

ANNA RENAISSANCE SCHEME

The Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi (1996-2001) announced in the Budget Speech 1997-1998 that a scheme called “Anna Renaissance Scheme” would be implemented with a view to develop all the villages with modern facilities since 1997.\(^1\) Further he stated that, the scheme would be implemented by selecting one village in every Legislative Assembly Constituency in the State and each member of the Legislative Assembly shall have the prerogative to select a village of his \(\text{or her}\) choice every year.

The Chief Minister M.K. Karunanidhi (1996-2001) inaugurated the first "Anna Renaissance Scheme" on 26th June 1997 in Ponnai Village of Walajapet in Vellore District. A Co-ordination Committee headed by the Collector of the District, monitored the activities of the scheme to complete it before the end of March 1998. This scheme was continued till 2000.

The basic objectives of this scheme were to provide the seven basic minimum services under the prioritised sectors of (a) Drinking Water (b) Primary Education (c) Public Health (d) Nutritious Meal (e) Habitation (f) Rural Roads and Link Roads and (g) Fair Price Shops.

Street Lights

Under the Anna Renaissance Scheme, a total of 9,27,074 Street Lights including Sodium Vapour and Mercury Vapour Lamps were maintained by the Panchayats. The Government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned every year Rs.3.00 crores to weaker Panchayats towards clearance of Electricity consumption charges due to Tamil Nadu Electricity Board and maintenance of Street Lights since 1997.³

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³ Ibid.
Rural Water Supply

In Tamil Nadu, Panchayat Unions were maintaining 1.49 lakh hand pumps and 29,405 power pumps and a sum of Rs. 5.65 crores was sanctioned by Government of Tamil Nadu every year for the maintenance and rejuvenation of these pumps since 1993.\textsuperscript{4} In addition under Anna Renaissance Scheme, the Government sanctioned Rs. 100 lakhs every year since 1997 for the same purpose.\textsuperscript{5}

The Government of Tamil Nadu also released a sum of Rs. 8.00 crores to Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board for replacement of worn out pipelines during 1997-1998. Under Tamil Nadu Agricultural Development Project, out of 12,500 borewells targeted, 2126 borewells were drilled in June 1997 for the regular water supply.\textsuperscript{6}

Training for Rural Youth in Self Employment (TRYSEM)

The objective of the scheme was to provide training to rural youths to enable them to take up self employment in certain industries. Under Anna Renaissance Scheme during 1997-1998, a sum of Rs.619.24 lakhs was earmarked for this scheme. Both Central and State Governments had


\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Tamil Arasu, Op.Cit.}, July 1997.

\textsuperscript{6} \textit{Ibid.}
released their first installment of Rs.154.805 lakhs and Rs.131.505 lakhs respectively. Government of Tamil Nadu also released the second installment of Rs.154.305 lakhs for this scheme during 1997-1998.\(^7\)

Financial assistance in the form of subsidy was extended to the Central and State Government training institutions and training institutions run by voluntary organisations, which offered training to youths under TRYSEM. The Government run institutions were eligible for 100% subsidy, whereas 50% assistance was given to other institutions. During 1997-1998, Rs.191.60 lakhs was earmarked for this scheme. About 15,877 youths completed their training at the cost of Rs.598.22 lakhs for the year 1997-1998. Trained candidates were provided modern tool kits with 100% Central Government Financial Assistance.\(^8\)

**Self Employment Generation Programmes**

Under the Anna Renaissance Scheme Self-Employment Training was provided with 50% assistance from Government of India. The thrust of the scheme lies in raising the standard of living of the rural population below poverty line (with annual income below Rs. 11,000 per family) by assisting

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\(^7\) Tamil Arasu, Op.Cit.

them to acquire income generating assets through subsidy and Bank Credit. During 1997-1998, 51,550 SC\ST, 46,357 women and 1,565 physically handicapped were benefitted by this scheme.⁹

Anna Renaissance scheme was extended to Chennai Corporation during August 1997. Under this scheme, in Chennai Corporation one ward from each zone was identified to implement the welfare measures for the people. A sum of Rs.30.00 crores was allotted for this purpose and a booklet containing Anna Renaissance Scheme exclusively for Chennai Corporation was released by Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi on 19th August 1997.¹⁰ The following works were undertaken under this scheme :-

❖ Management of solid wastes, ensuring safe environment
❖ Expansion and improvement of the roads and streets
❖ Construction of Storm water drains
❖ Providing street lights and converting the existing lights to sodium vapour lamps
❖ Public health works like free distribution of medicines
❖ Administering vaccination, implementing welfare schemes for the child and mother, pollution control etc.

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¹⁰ *Dinamani, Tamil daily, Chennai, Dated 20th August 1997.*
❖ Primary Education and non-formal education schemes to attain the goal of Education For All

❖ Development of parks and play ground

The fund allocation to this scheme during 1997-1998 was Rs.52.00 crores. However, it was increased into Rs.75.00 crores during 1998-1999 and the same allocation was provided during 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. 52,943 works were completed at the cost of Rs.353 crores in Tamil Nadu under Anna Renaissance Scheme.\(^{11}\)

**NAMAKKU NAAME THITTAM (SELF HELP PROGRAMME)**

The Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi (1996-2001) inaugurated Namakku Naame Thittam (Self-Help Programme) on 26\(^{th}\) June, 1997 at Vinnamangalam Village in Vellore District.\(^{12}\)

A mass contact programme was already in existence, for the Government officials to meet the public and to redress their genuine grievances since 1969. In addition to this, “Namakku Naame Thittam” (Self Help Programme) was introduced by which the public can plan and execute

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\(^{12}\) *The Hindu, English daily, Chennai, Dated 27\(^{th}\) June 1997.*
their priority needs through voluntary efforts with the financial and technical support of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

This exemplary scheme was not only a programme in providing the basic amenities, treating as part and part of the Government's day to day affair, but also gave full liberty to the beneficiaries to take part in initial planning by giving top priority to the need based schemes. In this new doctrine, apart from the participation of the public in implementing the schemes, they also had the chance to select the schemes on need base.

Minimum public contribution was not to be less than 25% which might be in the form of cash, kind or labour. The activities included provision of basic amenities such as village roads, desilting of tanks and village ponds, construction of public health centres, school buildings, pathways to burial grounds, link roads etc.

**Aim of the Scheme**

* To involve the public in the implementation of developmental works
* To ensure that the entire benefits of the scheme reach the people
* To strengthen the relation between Government and public
* Speedy implementation
* Quality of works
* Speedy Socio Economic Development
* To create self-sufficient and self-reliant society

Implementation of the Scheme

With the help of Government of Tamil Nadu, public could fulfill their needs by themselves through voluntary efforts. The Scheme provided for the construction of buildings, bridges, canals, deepening of tanks and ponds, creation of assets and also provided for the maintenance of all works such as white washing of buildings, improvement of environment etc.

Public Social Service Organisations, Industrial Establishments and other Voluntary Organisations were allowed to participate to implement the scheme. The District Collectors were empowered to implement the Scheme with the assistance of various Departments.

The allocation of funds for this programme was enhanced from Rs.5.00 crores during 1997-1998 to Rs.10.00 crores during 1998-1999 and 9,722 works at a cost of Rs.48.00 lakhs were completed. The allocation of fund for the year 1999-2000 for this scheme was fixed as Rs.10.00 crores.

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This programme was extended to the interior rural areas for the welfare of the poor people. It was not a plan being prepared in the ‘Air-conditioned’ chambers of multi-storeyed Government buildings but in the open grounds of the rural hamlets under the shadow of lonely trees available on the dried yards.

The Grama Sabhas were being organised under such natural surroundings, to choose their need based as well as priority schemes. The Self Help Programme gave a new way in the democratic set up with a new spirit and enthusiasm by the rural masses.

By implementing this ideal scheme the common man gained knowledge of the scheme and apart from getting a chance to execute, awareness to maintain, protect and finally getting benefitted. Hence, it was being defined as a new belief in the democratic way. By massive participation, it created new world and it was a new trial with healthy atmosphere and had an inevitable chapter in the pages of the history of the economy of the nation.

**SAMATHUVAPURAM (EGALITARIAN HABITAT)**

In commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of Indian Independence, the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M. Karunanidhi (1996-2001) announced the
creation of "Samathuvapuram" or "Egalitarian Villages", on 15th August 1997, where members of all communities and religions leaved in harmony without any differential treatment.\(^\text{16}\)

**Selection of Site**

The State Government issued the guidelines to select the site for construction of Samathuvapuram. The guidelines are,\(^\text{17}\)

i) It should be a rural site

ii) Water logging and low lying areas are to be avoided

iii) Land should be appropriate and suitable for construction of building

iv) Priority should be given to create Samathuvapuram in government waste lands

v) In case of non-availability of Government lands, private lands may be acquired

vi) In case of temple lands, necessary action is to be taken through the Hindu Religious Charitable Endowment and Administration Department

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\(^\text{16}\) *Dinakaran, Tamil daily*, Chennai, Dated 16th August 1997.

\(^\text{17}\) *Dinamani, Tamil daily*, Madras, Dated 2nd April 1998.
After the selection of the site application from people living in the 10 km radius surrounding villages need to be sought. If the number of applicants is not sufficient, applications may be called from the neighbouring areas.

**Infrastructure Development**

In every Samathuvapuram roads, streetlights, water supplies, sanitation and drainage, school building, subcenter, noon meal center, park, veterinary hospital, business complex, cremation ground, television room, bus stop etc. are provided. The District Collector is empowered to decide the infrastructural facilities of each Samathuvapuram.\(^\text{18}\)

The beneficiaries are to be selected on a voluntary basis. Even though there is no income limit, priority should be given to those who lived below poverty line. A Committee headed by the District Revenue Officer with District Adi-Dravida Welfare Officer, District Backward Classes Officer, Thasildar and Panchayat Union Commissioner select the beneficiaries.

The received applications are scrutinized at the level of Deputy Collector with the help of B.D.O. As per the guidelines, the list of eligible

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\(^{18}\) *G.O.Ms.No.43, AD&TW Department*, Dated 15th May 1998.
applicants is approved by the Committee. Finally, the list is finalized and approved by the Gram Sabha transparently.

**BENEFICIARIES**

The Government of Tamil Nadu selected the following 18 communities for the allotment at Samathuvapuram.\(^{19}\)

1. Adi-Dravidar  
2. Maruthuvar  
3. Raja Kambalan  
4. Vannar  
5. Kullaalar  
6. Priamalai Kallar  
7. Thommara  
8. Agamudaiyar  
9. Gounder  
10. Naidu  
11. Brahmin  
12. Nadar  
13. Pillaimar  
14. Padmasaliyar  
15. Chettiyar  
16. Reddiar  
17. Muslim  
18. Kammalar  

The Government of Tamil Nadu planned to set up Samathuvapuram in all districts of Tamil Nadu. Further, it is estimated that 100 houses would be

built at a cost of Rs.35,000/- per house with modern flush, equipped with cupboards and doors and windows, with concrete roofing.

The houses are being allotted, free of cost to 100 people living below poverty line. Out of the 100, 40 houses are being allotted to Adi-Dravidars, 25 to Backward Classes, 25 to Most Backward Classes and 10 people of other communities.

**Declaration of the Beneficiaries**

The beneficiaries at Samathuvapuram should take a pledge over the following resolutions and agree to undertake to implement the following conditions and for that they should sign a document as “declaration”.20 The following declaration was prepared by the Government of Tamil Nadu while announcing the proposal of Samathuvapuram in 1997.

i) "I and my family members who reside in Samathuvapuram will live in peace, conserve harmony and unity without bias for any community or religion.

ii) I, who intend to reside in Samathuvapuram will perform my prayers in the community, help and organize marriage and other ceremonies in

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the community hall. I shall not resort to formation of independent prayer hall in a place meant for common prayer.

iii) If by any chance death occurs in my family, I shall bury or cremate the dead body in the common graveyard to be formed. I shall follow the guideline of oneness in burial and cremation.

iv) I shall not consent, attempt or permit installation of statue of any communal or religious leader.

v) I shall neither lease out nor create encumbrance on the allotted house in stretch of five cents of land of Samathuvapuram for a minimum period of fifteen years, nor shall I leave it unoccupied.

vi) I shall reside in the house allotted to me.

vii) I shall maintain hygienic condition in Samathuvapuram without detriment to public health.

viii) I shall plant and grow at least two trees in the allotted vacant space.

ix) I shall not encroach into any vacant space left for public utility nor will I allow anyone to encroach upon the vacant site meant for public use.

x) The members of my family and I will utilize the public water taps, overhead water tank, fair price shop, television room, Arivoli library,
roads, entrance arches and parks in a proper manner and we shall not cause any damages to them nor will I give room for any complaint.

xi) I shall utilize the common facility areas like public water tap, park and television room without any bias towards any community or religion.

xii) In the event of my violating the above condition, I give my consent to the State of Tamil Nadu to take over the five cents of land and the superstructure built therein. If I have made improvement in the area allotted to me at my own cost, I shall not call upon the State to reimburse the expenses incurred by me for making improvement in the space allotted to me.

xiii) The members of my family and I shall abide by the rules and regulations imposed by the state of Tamil Nadu through the District Collector periodically.

Loan Assistance and Grant from the State

Each beneficiary in Samathuvapuram was sanctioned a subsidy of Rs.35,000/-. In addition to this, loan assistance to the extent of Rs.12,000/- was provided to the beneficiaries through the Co-operative Housing Society. The Government of Tamil Nadu sanctioned an additional subsidy of Rs.2000/- and residuary loan assistance to the extent of Rs.10,000/- to each
beneficiaries. The District Rural Development Agency sanctioned a subsidy of Rs.2000/- for construction of modern toilet.\textsuperscript{21}

Each beneficiary stood to gain to the extent of an additional subsidy of Rs.810 in lieu of payment of service connection charges payable to the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board as the State of Tamil Nadu took care of this item of expenditure.\textsuperscript{22}

**Maintenance Committee**

A committee consisting of ten beneficiaries was constituted to maintain and manage Samathuvapuram. This Committee took care of the following aspects.\textsuperscript{23}

i) maintaining cleanliness at Samathuvapuram

ii) maintaining of common public tapes

iii) maintenance of television

iv) maintenance of library and fair price shop

v) maintenance of trees

vi) maintenance of barbed wire fence around Samathuvapuram

vii) maintenance of informatory boards

\textsuperscript{21} G.O.Ms. No. 99, AD&TW Department, Dated 12th June 1998.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
viii) counseling to alcoholics and to eliminate alcoholism

ix) conservation of cleanliness in public places and

x) General Committee was to take care of general administration and entire administrative functions at Samathuvapuram.

**Placards**

More than twenty placards containing messages impressing upon communal harmony, elimination of untouchability, etc. are installed at advantage points at Samathuvapuram. The thought-provoking messages in the placards are the following.\(^{24}\)

- Brotherhood is equality
- Let us preserve religious harmony
- Let us eliminate untouchability
- There is nothing more than two castes (male and female)
- If we have to attain equality, should shed communalism and castes
- The meaning of democracy is equality
- Let us grow humanity.
- Let us live as children of one mother.

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❖ We saw the Golden Jubilee, and we will soon see a new society and
❖ Let us forget alcoholism and take care of our families.

The Chief Minister M.Karunanidhi, on 17th August, 1998, inaugurated the State’s first Samathuvapuram at Melakottai village in Thirumangalam Taluk of Madurai District. While addressing, the Chief Minister said that “the objective behind creating Samathuvapuram is towards reaching the goal of making Tamil Society live as a homogeneous one.” Samathuvapuram, which was being created first in Madurai District, was implemented in every district. Further, he appealed to the beneficiaries to realize the spirit behind the Samathuvapuram and called upon them to co-operate with the Government in its efforts in creating good citizens from the Samathuvapuram.

The Economic Times published an article on Samathuvapuram and stated that “the search for a just, free and prosperous society occupied the minds of visionaries all over the world. The move towards fulfilling their aims was epitomized in India by the severe counsel of Mahatma Gandhi, who upheld the principles of Swadeshi, Swarajya and Self sufficiency. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu M.Karunanidhi not only cherished a vision

but also sought to implement the principles of Mahatma Gandhi through the Samathuvapuram project."^{27}

The India Today also stated that the objective of Samathuvapuram was to achieve the goal of making people live as a homogenous one. The harmony prevailing in these villages would be a model for the whole country and these efforts would make India itself a Samathuvapuram.\textsuperscript{28} The name Samathuvapuram in Tamil Nadu was changed into Periyar Ninaivu Samathuvapuram on 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1999.\textsuperscript{29}

S.R. Balasubramanian, Congress MLA charged that most of the houses were allotted only to the DMK volunteers and this type of efforts created more communal troubles within the villages. Further, he alleged that most of the allotees pledged their houses in the form of second sale and the basic concept of the Samathuvapuram was vitiated.\textsuperscript{30} The Government denied all the charges and assured that the Samathuvapuram would be a model for India.\textsuperscript{31} Inspite this kind of criticisms, the scheme is truly a noble attempt towards forming a casteless society. List of Samathuvapuram is enclosed in Annexure C.

\textsuperscript{27} The Economic Times, English daily, New Delhi, Dated 29\textsuperscript{th} January 1999.
\textsuperscript{28} India Today, English Monthly, New Delhi, Dated 1\textsuperscript{st} February, 1999.
\textsuperscript{29} G.O. Ms.No. 50, Rural Development, Dated 8\textsuperscript{th} April 1999.
\textsuperscript{30} Daily Thanthi, Tamil daily, Chennai, Dated 28\textsuperscript{th} May 1999.
\textsuperscript{31} Murasoli, Tamil daily, Chennai, Dated 29\textsuperscript{th} May 1999.
The “Uzhavar Santhai” (Farmers’ Market) scheme was first mentioned in the budget for the year 1999, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu on the 17th March 1999. It was formally announced on the 25th October 1999 in the meeting organized by the Chief Minister’s special cell to review the developmental activities of the various departments. In this meeting it was decided to implement the Uzhavar Santhai Scheme with immediate effect. On the 14th November 1999 the first Uzhavar Santhai was inaugurated in Anna Nagar, neighbourhood of Madurai by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. Karunanidhi. Within a year, 95 Farmers’ Markets were established, and reached a total of 102 by the 31st March 2001.

The objectives of Farmers’ Markets in Tamil Nadu are:

- To eliminate middlemen and traders from the marketing of vegetables in the Farmers’ Markets.
- To establish direct contact between farmers and consumers.

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32 Murasoli, Tamil daily, Chennai, Dated 18th March 1999.
33 The Hindu, English daily, Chennai, Dated 26th October 1999.
34 Dinamani, Tamil daily, Dated 15th November 1999.
• To maintain stability in the prices of fresh vegetables and fruit.

• To increase coordination between the Agriculture and the Horticulture Departments.

• To act as information centres for the marketing of fresh vegetables and fruit.

• To promote awareness and provide training in relation to the preservation and packaging of perishable fresh vegetables and fruit.\(^{36}\)

**The Salient Features of Farmer's Market**

➢ The customers have wide choice of vegetables fresh from the gardens.

➢ No under-weighment. Weights and Measures were supplied by Market Committees.

➢ Price fluctuation was monitored by the Committee of the Farmers and the District Market Committee.

➢ Technical Assistance for packing and handling of the perishable items were protected by the Market Committee.

➢ The Market serves the cultivators of 10-15 villages situated in a radium of 40 kms, from the City Corporation or Municipal and Major towns.

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Co-operative Bank Branches were opened to encourage thrift and banking habits among the village section.

The unsold items were stored for sale next day. Telephone, Fax, toilet and water supply were made available to the farmers.\(^{37}\)

Participating farmers for each Market are selected by officers from the Agriculture or the Horticulture departments. In order to be selected, farmers must

- Cultivate vegetables at the time of their selection.
- Live in a village within a radius of 40 km from the Farmer’s Market to which they are allocated

Selected farmers are then issued a laminated identity card with her/his photograph and that of a family member or an assistant authorized to attend the Farmers’ Market in the absence of the cardholder. A second card, called the validity or ‘White’ card, contains details of the vegetables currently cultivated by the identity cardholder, the harvest period and the expected yield. Only the vegetables listed in the validity card can be officially sold in the Farmers’ Market.\(^{38}\)

Both cards were checked each day when farmers arrived at the Market by officers from the Agriculture and Horticulture departments. The purpose of the cards was to ensure that only genuine farmers sold their own produce in the Market, and farmers who lost any of their two cards had to apply for a replacement to the Agriculture department. The maintenance and up-keep of the Farmer's Market throughout the State was undertaking State Agricultural Marketing Department.\textsuperscript{39}

The buses plying in feeder village roads were fit with luggage carriers so that the general travelling public is not inconvenienced. The Market Committee ensure sales tents on the basis of 'first come, first served'. The sellers formed themselves into a committee to discuss their problems and sort out their issues with the least interference from the officials. The District Collectors were given power to ensure smooth working of the markets and gave guidance to the farmers and the connected officials.

The Commissioner of State Agricultural Marketing, responsible for the successful functioning of all Farmer's Markets, sends bi-monthly reports to the Government for appropriate review.

\textsuperscript{39} G.O.Ms. No.488, Agriculture Department, Dated 12\textsuperscript{th} November 1999.
True that the Farmer’s Market was a symbiotic endeavour benefiting the buyer and seller, the farmer and customer bringing them face to face which deserved emulation by other States where the middlemen flourished at the cost of the hard working poor peasants and farmers.40

The Governor of Tamil Nadu, Ms.Fathima Bivi, while delivering the Budget Speech 2001-2002 in Tamil Nadu Assembly on 29th May 2001, stated that many Uzhavar Santhai would be closed soon and the transport facilities would be stopped.41

During May 2001, Ms.J.Jayalalitha became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu (2001-2006) and ordered to close the Uzhavar Sandhai at Ambathur in Thiruvalluvar District on 30th May 2001 for the lack of response from the farmers and consumers.42

The DMK MLA Ko.Si.Mani raised the objection in the Legislative Assembly and stated “The scheme should be continued and the mistake must be rectified, but it should not be closed.43 The Congress M.P. P.Chidambaram also condemned the Government action.44 Many Farmers

44 Ibid.
from Gudiyatham staged dharna at Vellore Collector Office to reopen the Uzhavar Santhai at Gudiyatham. M.Karunanidhi became the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 29th May 2006, and ordered to continue all the Farmers Market in Tamil Nadu. The list of Uzhavar Sandhai is enclosed in Annexure D.

RAIN WATER HARVEST (RWH)

The Rain Water Harvest Scheme was announced on 15th August 2001 by the then Chief Minister J.Jayalalitha (2001-2006) in her Independence Day address to the people of Tamil Nadu. She declared “Rain Water Harvesting will be accorded the highest priority by the Government”.

It was in this context that the path breaking efforts to promote Rain Water Harvest (RWH) was taken by the Government of Tamil Nadu during 2002-2003 under the direct supervision of the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J.Jayalalitha.

The Rain House built by the Akash Ganga Trust was made as a model house on Rain Water Harvesting, where public could learn everything they

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needed to know about Rain Water Harvesting. This included RWH designs, cost estimates and a list of contractors to implement the system.\textsuperscript{48}

The brain child of Akash Ganga Trust, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan's house was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J.Jayalalitha on 21\textsuperscript{st} August 2002. This centre was sponsored by Chennai Corporation, Metro Water, Chennai Metro Development Authority and Tamil Nadu Water and Drainage Department. It played an important role in educating the public about Rain Water Harvesting and its benefit.

In October 2002, Building Regulations of all local bodies, rural and urban, were amended, making it mandatory to provide Rain Water Harvesting in all buildings. Owners of existing buildings were given one year time to provide RWH structures i.e. upto 10th October, 2003.\textsuperscript{49} Rain Centres were opened not only in Chennai but also in the districts to propagate Rain Water Harvesting. A media campaign was also launched to create awareness among the public for Rain Water Harvesting.

The Chief Minister personally wrote to 15,000 Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of urban and rural local bodies on 18\textsuperscript{th} July 2003\textsuperscript{50} to join in

\textsuperscript{48} Dr. Namadhu MGR., Op.Cit., Dated 22\textsuperscript{nd} August 2002.
\textsuperscript{49} Times of India, Harvesting – A Dream, Times Tower, Chennai, 2003.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
this mass movement to conserve water through RWH. The response from the Chiefs of Local Bodies to her appeal was absolutely overwhelming. The elected representatives created awareness and personally participated in all awareness programmes organised by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The District Collectors played an important stellar role in organizing students’ rallies, human chains and workshops with elected representatives to create awareness about the programme. People from all walks of life participated in the awareness programme and their involvement in the programme was quite spontaneous.51

To popularize Rain Water Harvest the Government of Tamil Nadu has took the following efforts:52

• Special meeting was organised in all the districts and the Chief Minister’s Appeal was handed to all the Local Body Chiefs.53 This direct appeal from the CM had a tremendous impact.
• The campaign for RWH covered the entire State with the active involvement of students from schools, colleges and other educational institutions.

51 Dinamani, Tamil daily, Dated 27th July 2003.
52 Dinamalar, Special Issue, Dated 5th August 2003.
53 Dinamalar, Chief Minister J.Jayalalitha’s Appeal to the Elected Representatives, Dated 24th August 2003.
• District Collectors organised massive rallies and human chains at the behest of the CM, involving voluntary organisations, school students and college students, to make it a mass movement.

• The CM requested the Collectors to involve Women’s Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in rural areas.

• Seminars were held exclusively for women in the rural areas to sensitise them on the utility of RWH structures.

• The Chief Minister mooted a proposal to award a prize and write a personal letter to each and every child in each and every class, who personally motivates his/her parents to provide RWH structures in his/her house.

• The Metro Water also requisitioned the services of engineering students and polytechnic students. A total of 55,000 students were pressed into service for a one-day door-to-door campaign in Chennai city alone.

• Prizes were instituted for the three Best Schools and three Best Teachers in each district, who successfully propagated Rain Water Harvesting. Educational institutions organised rallies on RWH. They carried publicity material and distributed it to passers-by. Human chains were organised in an attempt to enhance awareness.
• The Collector of the Best District in terms of performance with regard to rainwater harvesting was being awarded a shield.

Government agencies took swift action to implement RWH structures in their buildings. Some of the early buildings that implemented RWH were:

• Chennai Corporation installed RWH facilities in Rippon Building. It also provided RWH structures in all its buildings including schools, playgrounds and flyovers. It introduced rainwater-friendly storm water drains without concrete lining to allow seepage and recharge of groundwater.

• Chennai Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (CMWSSB) installed RWH at its head office as well as all buildings owned by the Board. It provided RWH in the city slums and also offered free technical advice to the public and other institutions.

• Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD) installed RWH structures at its head office and at all office buildings owned by it at the district level. It organised Information Centres at all its district level offices and provided free technical guidance throughout the State.
However by June 2003, out of one crore buildings assessed to property house tax all over the State of Tamil Nadu, RWH structures were established only in 8.84 lakh buildings. This, therefore, called for stronger action. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J.Jayalalitha (2001-2006) through an Ordinance made it mandatory for all buildings to implement RWH structures by 31st August 2003,\textsuperscript{54} which included,

- Implementation of RWH in all Government offices, schools and hospital buildings
- RWH structures for all buildings proposed for construction
- RWH as a prerequisite for obtaining new water and sewage connections
- RWH as an in-built component for all rural and urban water supply schemes

The ordinance cautioned, "Where the Rain Water Harvesting structure was not provided as required, the Executive Authority or any person authorised by him in this behalf may, after giving notice to the owner or occupier of the building, installed the Rain Water Harvesting structures in such buildings and recovered the cost along with property tax". It also

\textsuperscript{54} \textit{The Hindu, English daily}, Chennai, Dated 1\textsuperscript{st} September 2003.
warned the citizens that water supply connections would be disconnected if rain water harvesting structures were not erected.

The programme that began as a direction from the Government of Tamil Nadu rapidly got support from the public and became a People’s Movement. About 85% of buildings in rural and urban areas installed RWH structures by 31st August 2003.55

II Phase of Rain Water Harvest

After the grand success of the rooftop RWH programme, the Government of Tamil Nadu launched the next phase of the Rain Water Harvesting programme. On 20th August, 2003, the Chief Minister directed that the RWH campaign would be extended to cover all open areas, fields, patta lands, road margins, thoroughfares, streets, tanks and ponds and all other areas which had potential for harvest of run-off water.56

The Chief Minister stated that this extended campaign was to harvest every drop of water not only for drinking but for irrigation as well and the objective was to make Tamil Nadu a ‘Water Bountiful State’. Once again,

Chief Minister personally wrote to all the Local Body Chiefs requesting them for their active involvement in the programme on 23rd August 2003.

Special Gram Sabha meetings were convened to create awareness among farmers to implement the programme. The target date was set as 30th September 2003 so as to ensure that the North East monsoon rains due in October 2003 were fully harvested. The response to this extended programme was also tremendous and about 74% coverage was achieved by the last week of September 2003.57

Tamil Nadu is the only State in the country which has achieved 100% coverage in rooftop Rain Water Harvesting in both urban and rural areas. It is also the only State which is on the threshold of achieving total harvest of all surface run-off water. This is a tremendous achievement unmatched anywhere in the country.58

The Chief Minister’s vision became a People’s Movement and the people in Tamil Nadu became aware about one message as far as water is concerned... “Every Drop Counts”. Collectively, the people of Tamil Nadu have harvested and conserved each and every drop of water to avoid droughts in the future.59

58 Ibid.
This scheme was vehemently criticized by the opposition leader M. Karunanidhi who stated that this scheme was nothing but a burden on every citizen in Tamil Nadu, particularly the poor people living in huts and hamlets. Yet the scheme was successful and was followed by neighbouring States like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala etc.

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60 Morasoli, Tamil daily, Chennai, 19th August 2002.