Shrinking space: Slum dwellers crammed in shelters

No space to stretch for the City’s poor

Satish Shete

BANGALORE: A house of hardly 270 sq ft in Deshiyanagar in Frazer Town offers shelter for three families. Three couples, with their 10 children, sleep on the floor. Plastic sheet on the toilet is used as a bed. Three of them sleep in the bathroom and the other on a makeshift bed on the toilet floor.

“Three reflects the plight of the families settled in the Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) programme under the Central-sponsored JNNURM initiative. A man who has to pull the housing colony reveals the construction has been under-submitted. Even basic infrastructure facilities like sufficient water and sanitation are not in place. Floors are uneven and walls have constant cutting, women say.

But the occupants, who are often called by the patronising term ‘beneficiaries’, have no choice but to come to live here as they have no better choice in a City like Bangalore where the land is rich.

The Kanyakumari Slum Clearance Corporation (KSCB), under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, is planning to resettle these families from the Badami Cluster slum in the city’s Frazer Town. About 32,000 families have occupied 32 houses each in the slum. As a result the members of 90 families have to move into the houses.

The BBMP, which has completed construction of a public in the area, the board has to complete the resettlement before June 2010. But going by the deadline, KSCB has no work.

For the KSCB, the task is to complete the construction of 112 dwelling units on the plot of 10,000 sq ft. The project is likely to be completed in two months. The public is completed, with the detailed project report going to the ministry for approval before completing the construction.

As per the deadline, KSCB should complete the construction of 112 dwelling units for the beneficiaries of the slum before June 2010. The implementation agency, which is the KSCB, has to complete the construction within six to seven months from the date of the trend. The project received the nod from the ministry in April 2009, is expected to complete the construction in June 2010 but even in the months to come, the construction is unlikely to be completed.

A visit to the houses where the construction is being done, shows the work is not up to the mark. The authorities have been assigned the task of fulfilling the beneficiaries’ slums.

The poor have lost the houses they had occupied as the families are being shifted to the construction of the housing colony. While the beneficiaries of the slum are happy with the quality of the construction work, the work is not likely to be completed until six months to come. The detailed project report of the housing work is not included in the project for providing transit housing for the beneficiaries till the construction is completed.

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“No option: Delay in completion of houses has forced a few families to live on pavements in Deshiyanagar (Frazer Town).

Yielding to pressure from the people in the area, the board completed construction of a block of 32 houses in January this year and asked the families to move into the houses. As a result the members of 20 families have moved into 20 houses which were completed.

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“Earlier, we had small dwelling place, but leading a miserable life. There were no rooms to share, no latrine, a unclean area. Evacuated last year. Now in a ‘beautiful’ area. No one is living without water and power. The house has become our second home,” says Kalamnath, a resident.

The Kshetra, who has occupied a house in the colony, says: “There is no work.”

According to Rajani Bai, a resident, when he was a slum dweller under the JnNURM, he used to get job easily but not under the JnNURM; he has no work.

The construction of 112 homes at the village, that began in June 2009 should have been completed by June 2010, but still not completed.

Kalyani residents happy

The KSCB has provided housing for 33 families in Kalyani Slum in Sampagantu Nagar, about two years ago. The community is happy with the quality of the construction of houses.

The Palike had provided transit housing for the beneficiaries till the construction of houses was completed. The allottees were moved to smaller quarters. Only one month after the construction was completed, the makeshift shelters were located along the stormwater drain in the area. The Palike shifted the beneficiaries to the transit shelters. A youth, Srinivasa, who was moved to bigger houses, says it is an inconvenience, especially for the elderly.

“I was shifted to a house of 270 sqft. I was shifted to a house of 270 sqft. Now it is a hell to live here,” says Prabha, a resident.

Many projects are behind their deadlines

Entitled families and local representatives had no work.

- Requirements other than housing, such as school, health centres, etc., are ignored.
- Even for bigger families.
- Many families find the 1+3 floor structures inconvenient, especially for the aged.

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Fact sheet

KSYC BBMP

Total houses 18,180 1,804
Completed 3227 154
Under progress 9131 204
Estimated 600 19

As a result many families have been allotted to the enti-}