

**Project:**

# **Straatbewoners vechten voor hun rechten**

juni 2012

Via onze partnerorganisatie Amaidhi in Nijmegen en de Indiase organisatie Karunalaya hebben we dit jaar een project gesteund voor de *pavement dwellers* (letterlijk: 'stoepbewoners': families die in armoede langs de kant van de straat leven).

Deze mensen hebben zich met hulp van Karunalaya georganiseerd.

Ze worden getraind en ondersteund in het leren kennen van hun rechten en het opkomen voor hun eigen belangen. De mensen organiseren zich, worden weerbaarder en beter bewust van hun eigen rechten. Daardoor kunnen ze onder andere hun kinderen beter beschermen tegen uitbuiting en kinderarbeid.

Ook leren ze hoe ze de bij de overheid (die hen aan hun lot overlaat) moeten aankloppen om bescherming en recht.



## **TN govt's reply to pavement dwellers**

Chennai: The Supreme Court's directive to the Tamil Nadu government, asking it to file a reply to the petition sent by the Pavement Dwellers Rights Association on the status of night shelters by January 23 (Monday) comes as a shot in the arm of these marginalised people. In its reply, the Tamil Nadu government on Monday, has informed the SC that it would consider the petition.

The Supreme Court had asked the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu to give details of the number of permanent and temporary night shelters in existence. It had also sought details of potable drinking water, toilet facilities for men and women, bedding and heating facilities and basic medical facilities available to the users and the occupants of the night shelters.

After examining the reports submitted by the SC Committee monitoring the status of night shelters for the poor in winter last December, the Supreme Court has criticised the states for not doing enough

to protect the homeless and passed further orders to come up with the status report. It also took on record the urgent appeal petition sent by the Pavement Dwellers Rights Association, Chennai, directing the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu to reply to the SC on the petition.

The debate on night shelters was initiated by a PIL filed by the PUCL (People Union for Civil Liberties) in 2001,

which resulted in a flurry of orders by the SC from time to time. It was later followed by the constitution of the Yashwantrao Chavan Committee in 2006.

B. Brindhar, President of Pavement Dwellers Rights Association, Chennai, who

filed the petition in the SC said, "The state government cannot get away by saying that they did not have enough space to house all the pavement dwellers within the city. When they are able to identify space and buildings to establish temporary shelters to comply with the SC order, why cannot they convert these shelters into multi-storied buildings to permanently house the pavement dwellers within the city limits as per the SC order?"

As per the recent affidavit filed by the Chief Secretary of Tamil Nadu, there are 30 permanent night shelters out of 115 in the state. At present, around 27,000 homeless are being constructed by the Tamil Nadu State Government Board to accommodate the slum dwellers on the banks of a canal.

If the government is planning to do something similar to Tamil Nadu's Slum: Free Chennai project, in which slums were cleared out of the city, then this is another disaster in the making," quipped B. Brindhar.



*Overall ondersteunde Karunalaya bij dit project met 10.000 euro*