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## Now, a village for transsexuals in TN

### Cuddalore Administration Has Identified Land For Building Houses For Them

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Cuddalore: In a unique initiative, the Cuddalore district administration has proposed to establish model villages for transsexuals in an effort to facilitate hassle-free execution of various welfare schemes under the newly established welfare board for the transgender by the state government. Tamil Nadu is the only state to give a gender status to transsexuals and a model village for them would also be a first in the country.

District collector Rajendra Ratnoo told TOI that the administration had identified a two-acre site in Cuddalore and it was in the process of identifying land in Panruti and Chidambaram regions to relocate transgender community and extend complete facilities including house site pattas, loans for construction of houses, ration cards and voters' identity cards among other basic requirements. One frequently heard complaint from transsexuals is that they are ostracised by the community which refuses to rent out houses to them.

"The entire initiative is to motivate transsexuals to come forward, with their self-esteem intact, and actively take part in the rehabilitation process initiated by the state government," he said. Revenue divisional officer R Brindadevi said the transsexuals would be provided with three-cent (one cent is 436 sq ft) house sites and the administration was presently studying the feasibility of extending loans through various schemes executed by the state and central government for construction of houses.

"Once the beneficiaries move into the proposed village, all other basic requirements right from ration cards, voter identity cards and medical care will be within their reach," she said. Ratnoo said the administration also proposed to launch self-employment programmes for the transgender settling in the proposed model villages to improve their socio-economic status.

The 10-day census to identify transsexuals in the district was undertaken by an NGO, 'National Environment, Empowerment and Development (NEED) of weaker section' headed by a transgender E Ramya. "The census operations had been extended by another one week and as on Thursday, 94 transsexuals had been identified. There are about 200 transsexuals in the district and census is on full swing in four regions, including Cuddalore, Panruti, Vadalur and Vriddhachalam. Transgender seek establishment of model villages in all the four regions," said Ramya.

Welcoming the state government's decision Ramya said more than 80 percent of the transgender are abandoned by their own family members and are living in absolute poverty in small groups in various parts of the district. "Prevalence of HIV among the transgender is very high and their relocation will also ensure proper medical care periodically," Ramya added.



EMPOWERED: Members of the third gender would be provided three-cent house sites, says revenue divisional officer