

**JOINT SUBMISSION TO THE UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON ADEQUATE HOUSING:  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBLE EXIT BY THE WORLD BANK AND THE  
TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT IN THE MUDP PROJECTS IN CHENNAI, TAMIL  
NADU, INDIA, 28 MAY, 2024**

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The World Bank-funded [Madras Urban Development Projects](#) (MUDP I & II) were implemented in Chennai in two phases, the first from 1977 to 1982 and the second from 1982 to 1987. The projects' objective were to "promote low-cost solutions in the areas related to housing, employment, water supply, sewage, and transportation, in an effort to make investments responsive to the needs of the urban poor".

In MUDP, the 'Slum Improvement Scheme' focused on the transfer of land rights and in-situ development, extending to 298 settlements (56 under MUDP I and 242 under MUDP II) benefiting 48,459 rightsholders (beneficiaries referred to as rightsholders<sup>1</sup>). It was aimed at providing the settlements with essential infrastructure. The two primary elements of the scheme were the provision of secure tenure (freehold titles) to the residents of the upgraded "slums" and the recovery of improvement expenditures through hire-purchase agreements.

Following the idea of providing plots, the role of the government was to provide inexpensive land, security of tenure, and basic services. Various iterations have been implemented previously ranging from a surveyed plot, a plot with all the services, to a plot with a core unit space on which the owners were expected to incrementally build their houses over time based on their accessibility to funds.<sup>2</sup> The World Bank's [Performance Audit Report of MUDP II \(1992\)](#) mentions that MUDP has succeeded in demonstrating that serviced land, land tenure transfer, and in-situ slum improvement were cost-effective ways of meeting the shelter needs of the urban poor. The report along with several other studies pointed out that many newly tenured residents have improved the conditions of their dwellings and more importantly saw thriving neighborhoods<sup>3</sup>. The positive impacts of the project led to its expansion to other cities under the Tamil Nadu Urban Development Projects (TNUDP I & II) from 1987 to 2004.

In 2022, the Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities( IRCDUC<sup>4</sup>) conducted an assessment in Chennai and Madurai to understand the challenges faced by the

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<sup>1</sup> Implementation of the World Bank financed housing projects in Tamil Nadu and its impact on the deprived urban communities - Report by IRCDUC and International Accountability Project

<sup>2</sup> McCarney, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Success when we deemed it failure? Revisiting sites and services 20 years later

<https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/sustainablecities/success-when-we-deemed-it-failure-revisiting-sites-and-services-20-years-later>

<sup>4</sup> IRCDUC is a consortium of community-based organizations, civil society formations and like-minded individuals who aspire to educate and empower the deprived urban communities in Tamil Nadu. make a difference in the lives of deprived urban communities.

rightsholders in accessing the security of land tenure under the MUDP. In 2023, a status report was published by IRCDUC as a follow-up to the 2022 report, highlighting the various challenges for communities to access sale deeds and ‘patta’ (land titles). IRCDUC also facilitated the application of sale deeds for 4 families from MS Nagar and ensured they could access sale deeds.

Despite several petitions to the World Bank and the Government of Tamil Nadu, there is no response from the Government of Tamil Nadu to any of the petitions submitted and the World Bank has responded by stating that “All these World Bank-financed projects are closed, and it is recommended to contact state authorities with specific suggestions”. As there is no formal and written response from the Government of Tamil Nadu, IRCDUC is submitting this write-up as a formal complaint to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing.

### **Overview of slum improvement programs in Tamil Nadu:**

**Families covered:** The table below shows the timeline and beneficiaries of the three projects executed by the Tamil Nadu government, with a significant part financed by the World Bank through various loans, data based on World Bank reports.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Year Approved</b>	<b>Year completed</b>	<b>Settlements covered</b>	<b>Families covered</b>
Madras Urban Development Project I	1977	1984	53 (in Chennai)	25,000
Madras Urban Development Project II	1980	1988	250 (in Chennai)	60,000
Tamil Nadu Urban Development Project I	1988	1998	490 (Chennai & 9 other urban areas in TN)	77,000
Total families covered				1,62,000

Of the 298 settlements under MUDP I and II in Chennai, 50 settlements were identified for assessment by IRCDUC. In Madurai, information was gathered by filing a request under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

### **The following key issues are highlighted based on the assessments conducted through elaborate studies and discussions with the rightsholders and the concerned officials:**

1. *Delay in issuance of Sale Deeds:* In 34 of the 50 settlements assessed, not a single rightsholder has received the sales deed for their houses, even after 35 to 40 years. Despite promises of freehold titles to residents of the city's slums, the World Bank states

that various 'legacy issues' have caused significant delays. These issues include the failure of land-owning departments to transfer land, non-transparent processes for calculating pending payments, mounting penalties, the unavailability of necessary documents, problems between the legal heirs, and encroachment of additional land by the residents. As a result, the issuance of sale deeds, the crucial first step toward obtaining freehold titles, remains unfulfilled. **Senior officials from the [Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board](#) (TNUHDB<sup>5</sup>) state they have devolved the powers of providing sale deeds to the executive engineers. But for over three decades, over 45,000 rightsholders of MUDP have been awaiting their freehold titles as assured by the project. The inordinate delay in issuing sale deeds is despite an order of the Madras High Court in 2012 directing the State government to ensure the execution of sale deeds for the families covered in the project.**

Because of a 'technical glitch' and lack of inter-departmental coordination families who were able to access sale deeds are unable to apply for 'patta' (land titles) to date. As a result, they are unable to exercise complete ownership over their lands.

2. *Land alienation:* These settlements were identified by the Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB now renamed to TNUHDB) and then finalized for the MUDP scheme. There have been several instances where the land classification and the details of land-owning departments were not taken into consideration and the board 'developed' the settlement only based on an enter-upon permission (EOP) basis. An assessment conducted by IRCUDC in October 2022 revealed that, of the 50 MUDP settlements assessed in Chennai, seven were located near water bodies, and more than 20 across Tamil Nadu - watercourse *poramboke*<sup>6</sup> were likely to be evicted and resettled, where the land alienation process is not complete. Even after 35 years policy decision related to the issuance of a sale deed for MUDP and TNUDP settlements in the watercourse *poramboke* is still pending. There is no clarity regarding compensation for such rightsholders in the event of cancellation of allotment orders.

In the case of Kanda Pillai Street in Chennai developed under MUDP II in 1983 in the land belonging to the Hindu Religious & Charitable Endowment Department (HR&CE) of the Government of Tamil Nadu, the land alienation process is not completed to date. Only after completion of the land-owning department, the sale deed process can be taken up by the TNUHDB. Currently, the 51 families are asked to pay rent to the HR&CE Department in addition to the payment to TNUHDB. They are considered as 'encroachers' despite having an allotment and are sent orders to vacate the premises.

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<sup>5</sup> The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board was renamed as the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board in 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Government Lands in watercourse are classified as Poramboke, there is no policy decision (available in the public domain) about the issuance of a sale deed for the settlements that are in these Watercourse lands. There have been instances where these allotments have been canceled in Chennai to evict the rightsholders of MUDP.

3. *Mounting Penalties:* The World Bank's Project Performance Assessment Report on TNUDP (2007) reveals that "with the frequent upward revision in prices midway through payment, several rightsholders have stopped regular payments, incurring penalty interest." The project's inconsistency and lack of transparency discouraged rightsholders from making regular payments, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, such as from money lenders, and to various forms of abuse. To date, most of the rightsholders of MUDP and TNUDP do not know that the delay in payment will result in an accumulation of interest that will increase monthly.
4. *Resettlement Flaws Amid MUDP Policy Delays:* The resettlement under the World Bank-financed Madras Urban Development Project (MUDP) is also flawed. On 23rd August 2023, 24 families (original allottees under MUDP) from Neduvankarai Pillayar Kovil Street, Arumbakkam, moved to tenements in NVM Nagar, Anna Nagar, under the Integrated Cooum River Eco-Restoration Project. This site is within two kilometers of their original homes. The children (legal heirs) of the original allottees of this settlement (around 40 families) were resettled in Ashipattu which is 30 kilometers from their settlement.<sup>7</sup> Their land allotments under the MUDP's 'Slum Improvement Scheme' were canceled, and they were given housing in NVM Nagar. Several other settlements, residing near the waterways, in MUDP settlements in Chennai and TNUDP settlements across Tamil Nadu are facing eviction threat because of delay in policy decision to regularize these lands and issue freehold titles as specified under the Slum Improvement Scheme of MUDP/TNUDP.

### **Expectations from the Government of Tamil Nadu:**

In order to comprehensively address and resolve all the related issues we urge the government to form a high-level committee under the Chief Secretary to the Government of Tamil Nadu or any officer in the rank of Additional Chief Secretary designated to address the pending policy decision related to settlements near waterways/transfer of ownership from original allottees to the current residents, land alienation issue, and issuance of sale deed and 'patta' by coordinating with the different land-owning departments and the revenue department.

The District Habitat Committees convened by the Greater Chennai Corporation (Urban Local Body) in Chennai and the District Collectorate should closely monitor the progress of issuance of sale deeds and patta.

Other specific suggestions to the TNUHDB are as follows:

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<sup>7</sup> 60 families from Neduvankarai Shifted to TNUHDB tenements in Thirumangalam, 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023, The New Indian Express, Available at: <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2023/aug/24/60-families-from-neduvankarai-shifted-to-tnuhdb-tenements-in-thirumangalam-2608218.html>

1. Establishing a special ‘sale deed’ cell at the head office of the TNUHDB to monitor the progress of issuance of sale deeds by expediting the process of land alienation and the applications at the division/estate offices.
2. The district-wise task force should be set up to expedite the issuance of sale deeds in the other 9 cities.
3. Strengthening the Grievance Redress process to address bottlenecks and corruption.
4. Financial incentives can be announced to encourage more people to apply for sale deeds.

### **Expectations from the World Bank:**

The pending issues related to the security of tenure in MUDP and TNUDP projects should not be side-lined as ‘legacy’ issues as there is a direct link between property rights and poverty reduction. Vulnerable families are unable to break free from the intergenerational transmission of poverty as they continue to reside in lands that may not be legally recognised, constantly subjected to threats of eviction. However, access to land titles under schemes like MUDP and TNUDP has enabled families to break the cycle of poverty.

IRCDUC urges the World Bank to consider the following suggestions to expedite the process of ensuring access to secure tenure for the most vulnerable groups:

1. The World Bank should take a clear position related to closed projects especially when there are continuing impacts on the rightsholders ( Project affected families - PAFs) and other projects being continued to be funded. There needs to be specific strategies for addressing prolonged adverse impacts on communities in closed projects.
2. The MUDP rightsholders especially those belonging to settlements near waterways face eviction due to delayed state decisions, risking their homes and savings.. The World Bank must continue to monitor these pending issues and ensure that MUDP rightsholders who are guaranteed ownership are not evicted from their lands.
3. Considering the unresolved issues and prolonged impacts of the projects on the rightsholders - such as non-access to tenure rights, mounting penalties, and increased debts - the World Bank must propose remedial measures through its ongoing [Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project](#).
4. We need robust “Responsible Exit Principles” to address long-term impacts on rights holders and ensure project deliverables are met. This includes assessing exit strategies, identifying impacts, and addressing implementation gaps. Audit reports should cover exit strategies and future actions for unfulfilled deliverables or adverse impacts.

We urge the World Bank to address these policy issues without any further delays and to take accountability and address these issues in the existing processes to ensure justice for the rightsholders.

**We request the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing to treat this submission as a complaint and take action on it within your mandate. We would appreciate it if the Special Rapporteur could follow up with the World Bank and the Government of Tamil Nadu and issue a public statement urging them to address the pending issues without any further delay.**

Submitted by:

Vanessa Peter,  
Founder,  
Information and Resource Centre for the Deprived Urban Communities  
[vanessa.peter81@gmail.com](mailto:vanessa.peter81@gmail.com)

Vaishnavi Varadarajan,  
Community Organiser, South Asia,  
International Accountability Project  
[vaishnavi@accountabilityproject.org](mailto:vaishnavi@accountabilityproject.org)

Sagar Jayaramulu,  
Masters' Student - UMD 20,  
Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Erasmus University  
[mail.sagarjayaram@gmail.com](mailto:mail.sagarjayaram@gmail.com)

## ANNEXURE

### 1. Details of World Bank-financed projects related to housing in Tamil Nadu

S. No	Project financed by World Bank	Details of Housing Component	Grant/ Loan	Project ID	Amount (million \$)	Approval Date	Closure Date	Project Status
1.	<a href="#">Madras Urban Development Project (MUDP) I</a>	Slum Improvement with Land Tenure	Loan	P0009724	24	8 March, 1977	31 December, 1982	Closed
2.	<a href="#">Madras Urban Development Project (MUDP) II</a>	Slum Improvement with Land Tenure	Loan	P0009783	87.9	16 December, 1980	31 March, 1988	Closed
3.	<a href="#">Tamil Nadu Urban Development Project (TNUDP) I</a>	Slum Improvement with Land Tenure	Loan	P009872	443.7	15 June, 1988	30 September, 1997	Closed
4.	<a href="#">India: Emergency Tsunami Reconstruction Project (ETRP)</a>	Resettlement and Ownership over Houses	Loan	P094513	465	5 March, 2005	31 December, 2011	Closed
5.	<a href="#">Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project (TNSUDP)</a>	Resettlement and Ownership over Houses	Loan	P150395	400	31 March, 2015	31 March, 2023	Closed
6.	<a href="#">Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project (TNHHDP)</a>	Strengthening Housing Sector Investment	Loan	P168590	50	18 May, 2020	30 June, 2025	Active
7.	<a href="#">First Tamil Nadu Housing Sector Strengthening Program (TNHSSP) Development Policy Loan</a>	Policy Reform in Housing Sector	Loan	P172732	200	18 May, 2020	30 June, 2022	Closed
8.	<a href="#">Second Tamil Nadu Housing Sector Strengthening Program (TNHSSP) Development Policy Loan</a>	Policy Reform in Housing Sector	Loan	P178329	190	30 June, 2022	30 June, 2024	Active

9.	<a href="#">Urban Mobility and Spatial Development Project</a>	Probable Impact - Resettlement of Urban Homeless Families	Loan	P168590	400	N/A	N/A	Proposed
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## 2. Representations sent to the World Bank and the Government of Tamil Nadu

Date	Petition sent to	Key issues highlighted	Response
Mar/ April 2015	U.S. Department of the Treasury by IAP and IRCDUC	Citizens report highlighting Issues related to the resettlement of PAFs in TNSUDP	<a href="#">Response from the U.S. Department of the Treasury</a> (U.S. Position on World Bank Investment in the TNSUDP).
Apr 2015	Visit of World Bank Team to meet affected communities of TNSUDP	No consultation with the PAFs and issues related to resettlement sites	Evictions reduced by 80% in the project and a revised resettlement action plan evolved.
Jan to Aug 2016	Task Team leader – TNSUDP by IRCDUC and IAP	Forced eviction of PAFs in JJ Nagar under different projects	Action taken and compensation provided under TNSUDP.
Oct 2017	World Bank India by IRCDUC	Eviction threat of rights holders of MUDP in Chennai	The World Bank’s association with MUDP ended in 1988 with the closing of the Project. Suggested that the issue of evictions be taken up with the concerned government agency.
Feb 2018	Task Team Leader - TNSDUP and World Bank India	Issues related to the resettlement of PAFs in TNSUDP	Response was received and some of the issues in the settlement were addressed by follow-up with the Government of Tamil Nadu.
Aug 2019	Country Director of World Bank India regarding TNHHDP	Concerns regarding eviction of 21,334 families	Response received regarding no resettlement of families under the project in April 2021.
Mar 2020	Task Team Leader- TNHHDP	Issues in the formulation of Tamil Nadu Urban Housing and Habitat Policy	The scope of TNHHDP does not include the preparation of the said Policy.
Mar 2021	Task Team Leader- TNHHDP	Concerns regarding eviction of 21,334 families	Response received regarding no resettlement of families under the project in April 2021.



Mar 2021	Government of Tamil Nadu (Housing and Urban Development Department)	Concerns regarding eviction of 21,334 families	No Response
Apr 2022	Task Team Leader- TNHSSP	Representation regarding the amendment of Tamil	Response received to write to Government of Tamil Nadu and World Bank India says
Apr 2022	Government of Tamil Nadu (Housing and Urban Development Department)	Representation regarding the amendment of the Tamil Nadu Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1971 - TNHSSP	No Response
Dec 2022	Country Director, World Bank India	<a href="#">Letter regarding land titles for rights holders of MUDP and TNUDP</a>	No Response
Dec 2022	Government of Tamil Nadu (Housing and Urban Development Department)	Land titles for rights holders of MUDP and TNUDP	No formal written response, Only verbal communication with the Principal Secretary, the Housing and Urban Development Department who urged IRCUDC to apply for Sale Deeds in settlement for which IRCUDC also facilitated the process in one settlement as a pilot. Support was extended by senior officials of TNUHDB but they only managed to get 6 sale deeds in 6 months because of the complications due to delay.
Feb 2023	Executive Director for the United States, The World Bank Group, Country Director, World Bank India by IRCUDC	<a href="#">Board letter with endorsement from 46 CSOs Land titles for rights holders of MUDP and TNUDP</a>	No Response
Feb 2023	Task Team of TNSUDP and World Bank Officials	<a href="#">Report on the present living conditions of rights holders of TNSUDP</a>	Response stating 'noted'
Jun 2023	Vice President for South Asia, World Bank	Board Letter with endorsement from 46 CSOs Land titles for rights holders of MUDP and TNUDP (same as above)	No Response

Jul 2023	Task Team of TNSUDP and World Bank Officials	<a href="#">Reminder about the report stating that the issues have not been addressed</a>	Response by Task Team Leader TNSUDP for the communication in June 2023 to the Vice President, South Asia and Task Team Leader. All these World Bank-financed projects are closed, and it is recommended to contact state authorities with specific suggestions
August 2023	Vice President South Asia, World Bank	Responses of World Bank India stating that it is a closed response shared.	No Direct Response
September 2023	Government of Tamil Nadu (Housing and Urban Development Department)  Managing Director of TNUHDB  Commissioner, Commiissionerate of Land Administration	Sharing of the report “Implementation of the World Bank Financed Housing Projects in Tamil Nadu and its Impact on the Deprived Urban Communities” on 15 September 2023 in Chennai. Recommendations to Government of Tamil Nadu Shared.	No Response
October 2023	Vice President South Asia, World Bank	Sharing of the report “Implementation of the World Bank Financed Housing Projects in Tamil Nadu and its Impact on the Deprived Urban Communities” on 15 September 2023 in Chennai. Recommendations to Government of Tamil Nadu Shared.	Response from the Practice Manager Urban, World Bank in November 2023. World Bank is no longer involved in the implementation of these projects and has forwarded our inquiries to the Government of Tamil Nadu to ensure that the concerns are not overlooked.  The Government of Tamil Nadu has adopted the Sustainability Framework by the TNUHDB to strengthen the planning and siting process.
November 2023	Managing Director (MD) of TNUHDB	Findings of the report titled “Implementation of the World Bank Financed Housing Projects in Tamil Nadu and its Impact on the Deprived Urban Communities” shared with the Managing Director of TNUHDB in a meeting with NGOs conducted on 21 November 2023.	MD of TNUHDB transferred in a few days and no written response about the action points discussed in the meeting.

November 2023	Practice Manager Urban, World Bank	Detailed recommendations for steps to tackle the challenges faced by rightsholders were presented at the 21 November meeting at TNUHDB..	No Response
December 2023	Task Team of the existing World Bank-financed project	No response from the Government of Tamil Nadu to any of the representation.	The Task Team Lead responded in January 2024 citing the response of the Practice Manager Urban, World Bank in November 2023 that World Bank is no longer involved in the implementation of these projects.
January 2024	Task Team of the existing World Bank-financed project	The Government of Tamil Nadu is not providing formal and written suggestions for the issues highlighted. Also sharing the <a href="#">media article</a> on the MUDP issue with them	The Task Team of the existing World Bank-financed project responded in January 2024 confirming the receipt of the email and stating that they will look at the documents shared and revert.
March 2023	Government of Tamil Nadu (Housing and Urban Development Department)  Managing Director of TNUHDB	Report and recommendations shared again.	No Response

### 3. Media Coverage - Web Links

Date	Issues related to the Project/ Media	Weblink
28 April 2019	Eviction of MUDP rightsholders – The New Indian Express	<a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2019/apr/28/after-35-yrs-govt-decides-land-allotted-to-slum-dwellers-was-mistake-1969857.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2019/apr/28/after-35-yrs-govt-decides-land-allotted-to-slum-dwellers-was-mistake-1969857.html</a>
8 March 2022	Resettlement under TNSUDP - Citizens Maters	<a href="https://chennai.citizenmatters.in/chennai-resettlement-in-colonies-ircduc-perumbakkam-semmenchery-study-39031">https://chennai.citizenmatters.in/chennai-resettlement-in-colonies-ircduc-perumbakkam-semmenchery-study-39031</a>
4 February 2022	Resettlement under TNSUDP -The New Indian Express	<a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/feb/04/expand-scope-of-high-level-panel-to-ease-resettlement-in-chennaiircduc-2415070.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/feb/04/expand-scope-of-high-level-panel-to-ease-resettlement-in-chennaiircduc-2415070.html</a>
4 February 2022	Resettlement under TNSUDP - The Times of India	<a href="https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/ngo-report-highlights-poor-infrastructure-in-resettlement-colonies/articleshow/89334704.cms">https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/ngo-report-highlights-poor-infrastructure-in-resettlement-colonies/articleshow/89334704.cms</a>

3 October 2022	Sale Deed Under MUDP/TNUDP – The Hindu	<a href="https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/four-decades-on-world-bank-funded-beneficiaries-in-city-slums-yet-to-get-sale-deeds/article65967630.ece">https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/four-decades-on-world-bank-funded-beneficiaries-in-city-slums-yet-to-get-sale-deeds/article65967630.ece</a>
4 October 2022	Sale Deed Under MUDP/TNUDP – The New Indian Express	<a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/oct/04/sale-deed-evades-residents-for-35-yrs-in-chennai-2504708.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2022/oct/04/sale-deed-evades-residents-for-35-yrs-in-chennai-2504708.html</a>
4 October 2022	Sale Deed Under MUDP/TNUDP - DT Next	<a href="https://www.dtnext.in/city/2022/10/03/75-families-of-mudp-schemes-yet-to-get-documents">https://www.dtnext.in/city/2022/10/03/75-families-of-mudp-schemes-yet-to-get-documents</a>
24 August 2023	Eviction of MUDP rightsholders – The New Indian Express	<a href="https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2023/aug/24/60-families-from-neduvankarai-shifted-to-tnuhd-tenements-in-thirumangalam-2608218.html">https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2023/aug/24/60-families-from-neduvankarai-shifted-to-tnuhd-tenements-in-thirumangalam-2608218.html</a>
24 August 2023	Eviction of MUDP rightsholders – The Hindu	<a href="https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/concern-over-eviction-of-families-from-land-allotted-under-the-world-bank-funded-mudp-scheme/article67231894.ece">https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/concern-over-eviction-of-families-from-land-allotted-under-the-world-bank-funded-mudp-scheme/article67231894.ece</a>
27 August 2023	Resettlement under TNSUDP - The Hindu	<a href="https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/evicted-and-resettled-years-ago-families-in-gudapakkam-continue-to-struggle-for-better-quality-of-life/article67194044.ece">https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/evicted-and-resettled-years-ago-families-in-gudapakkam-continue-to-struggle-for-better-quality-of-life/article67194044.ece</a>