

Draft Minutes of the Stakeholders workshop conducted on 27.02.2008 at Savera Hotels, Chennai.

As per the requirement of World Bank, Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project shall cause Highways Department to conduct an annual Stakeholders Workshop to obtain feed back from major stakeholders.

In accordance to the above, the annual stakeholders workshop was conducted on 27.02.2008 at Savera Hotel, Chennai and the minutes of the workshop are as follows:

At the outset, Thiru. A. Kabeer Ahamed, B. E., Chief Engineer (General), Highways Dept. welcomed the gathering. In his welcome address he stressed the need for strengthening the road network in our State which will be beneficial to the common man and for the growth of national economy. He explained the various categories of Roads namely National Highways, State Highways, Major District Roads, other District Roads that are being maintained by the Highways Department. He added that every year Government allocate sufficient funds for the improvement and maintenance of the State network of roads and there is a need for the stakeholders to involve in the development of road network.

Thiru. K. Allaudin, Secretary to Govt., Highways Department presided over the function. In his address he pointed out that our Country's economic growth has attained 9% and for this growth there is a need for growth in infrastructure development and the Government of Tamil Nadu has taken the development of roads on priority by allocating funds to a tune of Rs. 2600 Crores for the current year. He emphasized the need for Highway Engineers to consult the local public residing in that areas before designing the roads whereas earlier projects were designed without taking public view and the design of project should satisfy the users of the road. He said that the Govt. have constituted the stakeholders advisory committee and the suggestions given in the committee meetings are well taken and follow up action is being taken to

implement their suggestions. He added that steps are being taken to widening all the State highways in the State to a two lane road and about 6400 Km out of 9400 Km of State highways have already been two lanned and the balance length of road will be two lanned within a year. He said wherever possible bus lay byes are provided to reduce the traffic congestion and this scheme is implemented through comprehensive road improvement development programme and in future also the govt. have many plans, and projects to be implemented for which stakeholder's suggestion will be considered.

He further added that provision of cautionary boards and signages are missing in many places and the Hon'ble Minister has also expressed in every review meeting the need for providing more signages and accordingly action is taken to provide the same. He pointed out with concern that in delta districts, the roads are being used as thrashing floors by the agriculturists and due to that traffic congestions and hazards are taking place. While concluding his speech, he said that roads to be constructed with good quality and this type of stakeholders workshop will give room for sharing the views of stakeholders and also will improve the govt. plan.

Hon'ble Minister for Highways & Small Posts Thiru. Vellakoil M. P. Saminathan inaugurated the workshop by lighting the "Kuthuvilakku". In his inaugural speech he said the objectives of this workshop is to make use views / suggestions of the stakeholders in the construction of good and quality roads. During the past time roads were not laid with quality and the present Government is keen on providing good quality roads acceptable to the people and we have to maintain the roads in good condition. He added that there is much appreciation among the public that the road works are being carried out properly at present and to sustain such appreciation we have to carry out the works in an accelerated manner. Hon'ble Minister informed the gathering that the Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project is being implemented in 11 Districts and huge amount is being spent for shifting of utilities like EB Poles, Telephone poles and water pipelines. He emphasized the need for

proper analysis of characteristics of soils and based on that roads are to be properly designed and constructed. He made a mention regarding his recent visit to Pudukottai, where he noticed the water pipeline is running very close to the existing carriageway and there is no space for widening of the road which causes concern and such laying of pipe lines nearer to the carriageway to be avoided.

He further added that avenue trees to be planted on both side of the roads and unwanted trees to be cut. He pointed out now a days action is being taken to repair pot holes immediately and comprehensive quality check also being made during construction of roads. He said that the roads are being compacted using 10 Ton road rollers whereas vehicles having more than 10 Ton loads are being plying on the roads causing damages. He further said that to have quality check on road constructions more Engineers are assigned with the quality checks. He added that continuous driving of vehicles without rest to be avoided and the roads to be constructed and maintained so that there shall not be any causes for accident and at Road junctions in the roads leading to the main highway, there should be direction / signage boards. He concluded that the Engineers are instructed to provide accident free, environmentally friendly road to avoid accidents.

Thiru. R. Thiagarajan, IAS, Additional Project Director, in his speech, said that while upgradations of roads are being done, every care should be taken to satisfy the needs of the road users. When we see the news papers, everyday accidents are found to be regular news and for this we should construct and maintain the roads so as to ensure accidents free travel. He concluded his speech with a hope that this workshop would give opportunities for the stakeholder to give their valuable suggestions.

Thiru. Afzal, President, Tamil Nadu Omini Bus Owners Association, Chennai, stressed the need for conducting quarterly meetings to know about the developments that are taking place and the suggestions given by the road users are taken care off. He added that

Regulatory signages are to be displaced along the highways and parking for break-down vehicles may be provided to avoid traffic congestion. He added further that restaurants with rest rooms and other facilities may be provided at regular intervals in highways and also requested to govt. to provide accident free roads for use by the general public.

Thiru. B. K. Vaigundavasan, Managing Director, Tamil Nadu State Express Transport Corporation, Chennai, informed the gathering that the roads are being constructed / improved to cater the needs of Transport Corporation and accidents are taking place due to over speeding of vehicles and the drivers should realize this and accordingly they have to change their attitude of speed driving. He added that necessary training is imported to the newly recruited Drivers to learn proper driving manners and they are trained both physically and mentally and preparedness awareness is created for safe driving.

Thiru. M. K. Subramanian, Secretary Automobile Association of Southern India, Chennai, while welcoming the gathering informed that the government is responsible for providing the needs of public. He added that the vehicle population is increasing enormously and road travel is increasing day by day and the Highways are to be maintained in good condition and adequate network of road are to be provided. He added that roads are very often found with pot holes and cuttings and if it is not being attended to immediately it will lead to accidents and traffic congestions and therefore, the maintenance works should be attended immediately. He added that in Railways there is a gang man for a particular stretch and like that mazdoors shall be employed and instruction to be given to them to inform the concerned about repairs and for taking immediate repair works.

He suggested to provide help centers for taking care of break – down vehicles and telephone numbers of police control rooms may be displaced along the highway which will convey information about break-down vehicles to the nearest auto workshop. He further added that the response of public is very poor and whenever any vehicle gets break-

down in highways, no passing vehicle's driver take care to inform the Auto workshop regarding break-down in Highway of vehicle and this trend to be get changed. He wanted like weather forecast being published in News paper, the information regarding road repairs, improvement works can also be published in New paper so that the vehicle users shall have first hand information. He added that the pedestrian crossing to be painted and to be illuminated properly by the local bodies to avoid accidents.

Thiru, P. Hariraj M.E., Director, Highways Research Station, Chennai, in his address outlined that the economical development and industrialization of the country is mainly depends upon the development of Road Network and there is a repaid infrastructure development. He added that Road transportation is much preferred form of transport among other modes of transport and there is a marked increase in demand for the road network of road in recent years. He added that increased production and usage of Automobiles in varied category demand more road space for safe travel. He further said that the rural highway network has been constantly growing and the Highways department is geared up to meet the challenges in the demand for road space by ensuring quality construction and the department has pledged to provide high quality, economical, ecofriendly road network reliable at all the time safe which would contribute sustainable economic development of the state.

He further added that decades before, the department was looked as service providers by meeting the expenditure out of the annual plan there has been a paradigm shift in the out look. He added that Hassle free, congestion less, accident free, smooth flow of traffic has to be ensured and to achieve the – results and satisfying the customer “the road user, the stakeholder's presence, views, suggestions” will cause and attain paramount importance. He further added that the department is committed to improve the Quality Assurance and Quality Construct system and it is worthily to note that the Highways Research Station through its quality control wings is spear heading the task of maintaining

of quality standards in all the works of the department. He added that with the data collected over a period of time and analysis of the same, the causes of accidents could be enumerated and tackled well through a combination of short- term and long term measures which may range from an installation of a sign board to a reengineering measures. He made a presentation on the quality control set up and future proposal of Highways Research Station.

Thiru. S. K. Dogra, IPS, Additional General of Police, State Traffic Planning Cell explained about the importance of traffic planning for smooth flow of traffic and added that the traffic planning requires involvement of various organizations and planning is essential for accident prevention, smooth flow of traffic, economic utilization on fuel etc. and a Traffic planner has to design not only for normal traffic but also for the future. He suggested that the family of accident victim has also to be taken care.

He also emphasized the need for comfortable public transport which consumes less unit area compared to private transport. He explained about various causes of confusion on the road and the solution like infrastructure development, provision of traffic signal, are to be made creating awareness amongst the road users etc. He made a presentation on flow of traffic in uncontrolled and controlled road junctions.

He concluded that Traffic Management is not a simple task and it is a complex one and the Traffic Planner has to look into the issues very deeply before planning.

Mr. Jagadeesh, TNS mode Pvt. Ltd., mentioned in his speech that in the second road users survey conducted, the total sample size of the quantitative survey is more than 7000 and covered in 30 Districts and all type of stakeholders were interviewed. He added that in the survey findings there is an increase in the awareness of Major District Roads (MDR) and Other District Roads (ODR) and the usage of MDR and ODR

have been increased comparatively. He informed that the performance of the Highways Dept. with regards to various key areas like disaster emergency management, removing encroachments, maintaining roads and bridges have been found to be more than satisfactory.

The stakeholder workshop was concluded with vote of thanks made by Thiru. C. Balu, Chief Engineer (Works), Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project, Chennai.