

**DR. N. C. SAXENA, COMMISSIONER AND
HARSH MANDER, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER OF THE SUPREME COURT
IN THE CASE: PUCL v. UOI & Ors. WRIT PETITION (Civil) No. 196 of 2001**

6th October, 2009
MissionConvergence/710/Delhi

Smt. Sheila Dikshit,
The Chief Minister of Delhi,
3, Motilal Nehru Marg,
New Delhi 110011

Dear

It was a pleasure meeting you on 29 Sept 09. Thank you for the warm hospitality.

In follow up of our meeting, I am writing this same letter to the Chief Secretary, Mr Rakesh Mehta.

I spoke about my great concern about the need for taking early the next steps in Samajik Suvidha Sangam (Mission Convergence). The Delhi government has uniquely led for the first time in India a reform process of urban governance, in order to reach entitlements and social services to its poor residents. In fact, in our capacities as Commissioners to the Supreme Court, we have commended this to all state governments to emulate.

What has happened so far has been a) a massive process of identification of poor families, and b) some process of institutional reform with convergence at the level of the District Collector, supported by the Samajik Suvidha Kendras (the GRC's of the past with an expanded mandate). All of this is commendable.

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But what needs to follow next is the actual flow of entitlements through these new institutions (mainly the Collectors and SSK's) to the identified poor, who are either homeless, or socially and occupationally vulnerable residents of the slums. This has virtually not happened, despite the survey so far of 15,000 homeless families (more than one and a half years ago); and 9 lakh slum households.

As I understand it, the main reason for the standstill is the impasse created by the many new eligible persons and households which have been thrown up by the survey. These new eligible persons and households are for old age, widow and disability pensions, ration cards, ICDS and school admissions. I believe that the latter two (schools and ICDS) will create less problems. But for the former, the state government will have to take a major set of decisions. As I see it, there are two main options before the state government: a) to eliminate the ineligible persons from the old lists for BPL AAY cards, and pensions, and replace them with the identified eligible; or b) to top up the central subsidies received under these schemes with the state government resources, in such a way as to cover all identified eligible persons.

This is essentially a political decision. In the latter case, resources will need to be redeployed from other sources, or a special cess for social services to the poor can be imposed. We can also look for external or central assistance.

Once this decision is taken, I feel that departments can be given 3 to 6 months to cover all eligible persons who are identified by these surveys. The progress of each department then needs to be closely monitored, supported by a strong MIS at the Mission Convergence hub.

There is also need to plan urgently for the homeless, and I suggest that we plan for a minimum of social infrastructure for them as follows: a) 100 shelters for men and women; b) 100 residential schools for children; c) 20 special recovery centres for the

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sick and drug users; and d) 500 community kitchens providing cheap food, converged with the kitchens of MDM and ICDS.

Finally, there are concerns about how to make the construction workers' cess actually target the families of construction workers themselves, for education, health care, social security and shelter.

You had kindly suggested that we meet in a few days in order to finalise these many concerns.

Yours sincerely,