

## **The New Indian Express 12.11.2009**

[Only 10 pc qualified town planners in TN](#) [C Shivakumar](#)

CHENNAI: Guess why cities in Tamil Nadu are an eyesore? Hardly 10 per cent of the town planners in the State have the qualification to do their job.

“According to an estimate, there are around 50 qualified town planners of the 500 required in Tamil Nadu,” former State joint director of Town and Country Planning (TCPD) N Manimurukan said.

Secretary of Tamil Nadu chapter of the Institute of Town Planners India (ITPI) S Balasubramaniam concurred. “About 90 per cent of TCPD officials are not sufficiently qualified and there has been no direct recruitment of qualified town planners for the last 38 years,” he said. The trend was broken this year after Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission directly recruited three qualified town planners.

Manimurukan and Balasubramaniam spoke to Express on the sidelines of a seminar to mark the World Town Planning Day on Tuesday.

“From 1970, there had been no direct recruitment of town planners due to service rules. The town planners appointed in 60s and 70s had retired one by one,” Balasubramaniam said.

“Even now there are two vacancies of chief planners in Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority and the posts are yet to be filled due to service rule problems. As per the approved service rule, there is only provision up to senior planner level,” said former ITPI regional chapter secretary R Shivakumar.

“Even the quotas for the SCs and the STs in the department have not been filled,” Balasubramaniam said.

“TN lacks well planned cities because even the layout is prepared by town planners who hold a diploma either in ITI or in civil engineering. Ironically, qualified town planners don’t have licences to prepare the plans,” he lamented.

Manimurukan said: “Qualified town planners who graduated from the School of Architecture and Planning under Anna University were either privately employed by the Public Works Department or Highways Department as engineers.”

“In 2002, there were only five qualified town planners; in 2003, four; and in 2004, two. From 2005 to 2008, there was only one qualified planner. There was no qualified planner for more than one year till direct recruitment of three planners by TNPSC in August 2009,” he added.