

And now, hostels for sheep in Siddipet

Siddipet: Believe it or not, sheep in Siddipet district would be housed in 'hostels' as part of the administration's efforts to transform villages in the district into Swachha villages. This novel initiative, triggered by Finance Minister T Harish Rao's constant push for out-of-the-box thinking, has already taken shape in eight villages and more such hostels would be established in the days to come. These hostels, being set up in village outskirts, are designed to serve several purposes – keep the sheep away from villages and thereby maintain hygiene and cleanliness, restrict spread of infection since the villages would be free of sheep dung and urine, a source of diseases, protect them from stray dogs and other wild animals as also from thieves on the prowl to make a quick buck. These hostels have already been established in eight villages in Siddipet Assembly constituency, with each hostels comprising 8 to 45 sheds depending on the number of sheep in the village. Each shed will hold up to 100 sheep. The hostels come with proper power and water supply besides a rest room with fans and a television set thrown in for entertainment of the shepherds. While there is a provision to build sheds for cattle under MNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme), district officials put the provision to best use by getting some additional funds under Special Development Fund. Speaking to Telangana Today, DRDO (District Rural Development Organisation), Project Director, Ch Gopal Rao said shepherds were a bit hesitant initially but came forward voluntarily to keep their sheep in the hostels after seeing the facilities being provided. "These pucca sheds will save their sheep from stray dogs, wild animals and also thieves during nights. Besides, shepherds have to necessarily stay in their home sheds during nights. In these hostels, only two or three shepherds would be required to stay on a rotational basis," he said, adding that they also will not face the risk of snake bites which they do when they sleep in the open outside their sheds. Harish Rao announced that the administration would install CCTVs, provide solar power facilities, community soak pits and good rest rooms for shepherds at the hostels. "This is a first-of-its-kind effort in the entire country, and people from various States and other districts of Telangana have started visiting Siddipet to see the sheep hostels. We will soon



build such hostels for cattles too on the outskirts of villages which will ensure cleanliness in the villages and keep citizens healthy,” he said. Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, who inspected the sheep hostels in Siddipet recently, has vowed to replicate the ‘wonderful’ programme across Telangana since it had multiple benefits. In Ibrahimpur vilage, a sheep hostel was built in a sprawling three acre piece of land, with 46 sheds housing about 1,000 sheep in it. It is the biggest such hostel in Siddipet constituency. Vanka Ilaiah, a shepherd from Ibrahimpur, told Telangana Today that the 46 shepherds were allotted a compost pit each where they make organic manure that has a great demand in the market. Since the rest room has all the facilities including television, fans, cots, and drinking water supply, Ilaiah said the shepherds enjoy spending time at the hostel. Construction of similar hostels have been completed at Narmeta, Irkode, Jakkapur, Gangapur and Mittapally villages in Siddipet constituency while more are coming up at Akkanapally, Gatla Malyala, Pullu, Bussapur and Lakshmidivi Pally.

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