World Bank praises Tamil Nadu's 'Thozhi' working women's hostels

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News

A World Bank article titled 'More Than a Roof: How Safe Housing is Unlocking Women's Path to Education and Jobs in Tamil Nadu' praised Tamil Nadu's 'Thozhi' hostels and said other States and countries could adopt the model. Former Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin welcomed it on 7 Oct 2026. 'Thozhi' means 'female friend'.

Key facts

Run by	Tamil Nadu Working Women's Hostels Corporation (TNWWHCL)
Launch	July 2023 – first 11 hostels in 9 districts
Operating	25 hostels, 2,282 beds; about 5,300 women served
Expansion	22 under construction (+2,540 beds); 27 more planned; at least one in each of 38 districts
Average rent	Chennai ₹5,400; elsewhere ₹3,850 (monthly)
Finance	World Bank and ADB loans, State equity; 'Tamil Nadu Shelter Fund'

Background

- Economy: India's female labour-force participation is about 35%; the World Bank estimates that raising it to 50% could add about 1 percentage point to annual GDP growth. Tamil Nadu is above the national average.
- Model: government-owned buildings run through public–private partnership; biometric entry, 24-hour CCTV, Wi-Fi and online booking.
- Central scheme: the working women's hostel scheme is now 'Sakhi Niwas' under the 'Samarthya' arm of 'Mission Shakti' (2022).
- Constitution: Article 15(3) – special provisions for women; Article 39(d) – equal pay for equal work; Article 42 – maternity relief.
- World Bank: created at the 1944 Bretton Woods conference; headquarters Washington DC; President Ajay Banga (since 2023).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu has the largest number of women factory workers in India. 'Pudhumai Penn' (Moovalur Ramamirtham Ammaiyar Higher Education Assurance Scheme, 2022) gives ₹1,000 a month to girls who studied Classes 6–12 in government schools and go on to higher education.

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