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Over two lakh houses for slum dwellers

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Proposing a massive housing scheme for slum dwellers in municipalities and town panchayats, the State government has planned to construct around 2.15 lakh dwelling units at a cost of about Rs.13,455 crore.

If this proposal were to fructify, 25 per cent of urban slum families in these two categories of urban local bodies would be covered.

There are 126 municipalities and 528 town panchayats in the State. Kancheepuram, Cuddalore, Thanjavur, Dindigul, Theni and Tirunelveli account for about 35 per cent of the share.

The proposal has been listed in the prime slot of the chapter, titled 'Grants for State Specific Needs,' of the State

government's memorandum submitted to the 14th Finance Commission on Monday.

The government has requested the Finance Commission to recommend an assistance of 50 per cent (Rs. 7,150 crore) of the project cost, as it is of the view that the remaining 50 per cent can be met through its schemes and other programmes.

As per the government's plan, the scheme is to be taken up during 2015-2020. Of the total number (2,15,283) of houses, 1,46,392 will come up in municipalities and 68,891 in town panchayats. Keeping in mind the need for minimal displacement of slum dwellers, only 43,056 houses will be built after resettlement of the people. The remaining 1,72,227 houses will be raised through in-situ development. The unit cost is estimated at Rs. six lakh for in-situ development and Rs. 7.5 lakh for resettlement. The proposal has been formulated as there is not much scope under the existing schemes and programmes to address the housing problem of slum dwellers.

At present, 44,870 tenements are being constructed under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission at a cost of Rs. 2,431 crore in Chennai, Madurai and Coimbatore

municipal corporations, the total number of municipal corporations being 10. The tenements are slated for completion by 2015.

As for the remaining slums in the 10 corporations, the government has decided to construct one lakh houses under the Rajiv Awas Yojana by 2017. On completion of these programmes, all the corporations will become slum-free, according to the government's memorandum.