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## Project to provide water to slums gathers steam

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In the first phase, residents of 14 slums will benefit

Residents of 14 slums in the city will soon have access to regular drinking water and a sanitation system. An underground drainage system has already been put in place in 10 slums.

This is part of a project started by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). Last year, the agency proposed to supply water and offer underground drainage (UGD) in 96 slums. At present, it is about to complete work on water supply connections in 14 slums. Work on laying UGD lines has been completed in 10 slums, including in Arundathinagar, Gajanana Nagar, MCTR Pradesh, Bhoopsandra, Gautham Nagar, Gandhigrama and MC Colony.

A senior BWSSB official told *The Hindu* on Saturday that work on water supply and UGD in the remaining slums is underway. “Work is likely to gain momentum from next week,” the official said.

It had covered three slums — Cement Huts, Sudhamanagar and Chandranagar — between 2000 and 2002 as part of the AusAID Master Plan Project. The work was taken up as the slum development component of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded Cauvery 2nd Stage IVth Phase project. The aim was to ensure that slum-dwellers are not deprived of piped water and sanitation.

Inadequate services to the urban poor have always posed a major challenge to the Board in terms of unauthorised connections and related problems.

Last year, the Board roped in four non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to mobilise community support for ensuring drinking water and sanitary lines to the city’s 362 slums. Under this project, it proposes to provide pipelines and other accessories, including water meters, free of cost to the slum-dwellers. They will be charged only for the water used. The four NGOs – Mythri Sarva Seva Samithi, Indian Community

Development Service Society, New Entity for Social Action and Mahatma Gandhi Trust – were chosen from among 120 organisations through a tender process, the official said.

They are entrusted with the task of conducting a door-to-door survey. Besides finding out the socio-economic status of each family, the survey is also aimed at finding out whether the family has access to safe drinking water, how much money they spent on water and whether they are ready to get metered connections installed at their doorstep.

Based on their report, the Board is likely to further subsidise the tariff for these communities, the official said.