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BMC Plans 6,000 Houses for Slum Dwellers under RAY

Even as construction of houses under Integrated Slum House Development Project (ISHDP) is going on in the city, Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BMC) has taken up a project to construct 6,000 houses under Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) for the slum dwellers.

According to BMC records, there are 137 slums in the city and around 39 per cent of the city's population lives in these slums. Most of them live in informal settlements with no legal rights. Basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, electricity, roads and livelihood options are still a dream for these slum-dwellers.

The ISHDP was approved in 2009 and in the first phase, `12.8 crore was released. However, no decision has been taken on the rest houses of the project. The BMC implemented IHSDP in the city with Central assistance of ` 25.60 crore in two phases in 2009. As many as 1,202 beneficiary families from 24 slums in 19 wards have been selected for provision of houses under this scheme.

Work order was released for 984 houses of which 452 have been completed while 267 houses are in final stage of completion.

Aseem Mishra, Municipal Engineer of BMC said each house is estimated to cost ` 1.40 lakh. The beneficiary will pay ` 14,000 while the Central and the State Governments will pay ` 80,000 and ` 10,000 respectively with BMC's share being `36,000. Work order for the construction of houses were given to interested beneficiaries and those who denied, it was entrusted to the contractors.

The sources said Since the ISHDP proved inadequate to accommodate all the slum dwellers, the BMC urged the Central Government to sanction funds under the RAY. Later, the Centre directed the BMC to prepare a detailed project report.

BMC has entrusted a Bhubaneswar-based private agency OP & HC to survey the slum areas and identify land to construct houses for the project. The agency in its report suggested to construct 6,000 houses for the slum dwellers at 12 places in the city at an cost of around ` 300 crore.

A team of OP & HC came to the city to gather information on requirement of infrastructure recently. The team identified four places for first phase of the project.