

**The Times of India** 31.03.2017

## **AMRUT: A mission impossible in the making**



**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** The bad reputation the state has in handling centrally-sponsored schemes for infrastructure development has started getting reflected in AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation). Going by the progress of the scheme, AMRUT is following the downward trajectory of its precursor JNNURM with regard to utilization of funds.

The total central allocation to the state under AMRUT during the mission period (2015-16 to 2019-20) is Rs 1,161.20 cr. The state and the mission cities together have to contribute a matching share and the total outlay under [AMRUT Mission](#) is Rs 2,333.92 cr over a period of five years. Nine urban bodies including six corporations are covered under AMRUT Mission in the state.

With less than three years left, the state is grappling with the mammoth task of executing projects worth Rs 2,000cr in nine urban bodies. According to project officials, change in administration at the helm of local self-government department led to shift in strategies which resulted in delay in implementation.

While in 2016, the local self-government department decided

to engage a project development and management consultant (PDMC) as the key monitoring agency of AMRUT, the decision was later reversed and the state highpowered steering committee decided to explore various options of implementation without a PDMC. It was also cited that the functions of [PDMC](#) should be split as project development, quality assurance and project monitoring. The high-powered committee also mooted the interaction between government and academic institutions and it was suggested that expertise of academicians in reputed engineering colleges shall be utilised for project development, quality check and monitoring. All these factors led to the need for formation of an expert committee comprising sector experts for north and south regions. Although the move was driven by good intentions, the government order regarding formation of technical committee is still pending and without technical sanction of the expert committee, none of the urban bodies under AMRUT Mission have been able to implement projects.

The financial progress of all schemes under water supply , sewerage and septage management, storm water drainage, urban transport and green space and parks is zero even for projects that were approved in 2015-16.No tenders have been floated or awarded for schemes envisaged under water supply , sewerage and septage management. The only nominal progress has been recorded under small budget works approved in 2015-16 state annual action plan in Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram corporations.

State Annual Action Plan (SAAP) for an amount of Rs 973.64

Cr for 201718 has been submitted to the Centre for approval. "The situation is bleak for the state as the union ministry has mandated that we need to achieve 50% physical progress for works awarded during 2015-16 and 50% completion of DPRs (detailed project reports) for projects approved during 2016-17 if the state annual action plan (SAAP) for 2017-18 needs to be approved. In our case not even 10% has been recorded till now," an official said.