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Rs 85-crore scheme for slum-free state

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May 19: The state government has proposed to include more urban local bodies in its ambitious programme to ensure that towns in Tamil Nadu are slum-free by 2013. Twenty urban local bodies in Chennai and Madurai have been included under this programme.

About Rs 85.43 crore was released this past week to enable the completion of work in the 20 urban local bodies by this fiscal. The work mostly aims at providing self-contained tenements to the economically disadvantaged. As per the 2001 census, 43.9 per cent of Tamil Nadu's population lives in urban areas. A good chunk of this figure constitutes slum dwellers.

The programme also covers Coimbatore and it has been taken up under the Basic Services for Urban Poor Scheme with Central assistance under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission. It envisages to construct integrated townships with over 35,270 tenements in the three mega cities at a cost of Rs1,504.05 crore. About Rs 1.55 crore has been released for the fiscal 2010-11, sources said. The Centre released its third instalment of Rs 1.08 crore a few days ago.

The Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board will also take up work to provide basic amenities in existing tenements.