

POINT 15 : IMPROVEMENT OF SLUMS

16.1 Urban slums, particularly in the big cities of our country, are the picture of human misery and degradation. Urbanisation is an inevitable phenomenon of modernisation and economic development of the country. Slums grow as a result of structural inequities in the development of urban sector. The poor do not get adequate share so as to meet their basic needs for better living. Due to high price of land and housing and low purchasing power, urban poor are forced to join the existing slums for cheap shelter or to occupy any vacant land/areas wherever available in the city. In response to industrial and trade expansion and modernisation of the city, migration of the poor from the rural areas and small towns in search for jobs/work and better life further add to the proliferation of slums in the cities. Though the city enjoys the benefits of cheap labour, it is not able to absorb and accommodate them in the main socio-economic development of the urban society. As per the provisional results of 2001 Census the total slum population in the country is 40.3 million comprising 22.3% of the total urban population of 607 cities/towns reporting slums. The emphasis initially was on clearance of slums and rehousing of slum population. A scheme of financial assistance to State Governments and local bodies was initiated in the Second Five-Year Plan to enable them to clear some of the slums in big cities. Slum dwellers were provided developed plot, and housing with bare walls and a roof in the new locality. The scheme did not make much headway. In fact, the experience of implementation of scheme showed that in Indian conditions, it was very difficult to clear a slum from its long-term location. Further more, in a few cases where with big and continued efforts, the clearance was possible the slums tended to recreate it elsewhere.

16.2 It was, therefore, increasingly felt that greater emphasis should be laid on the improvement of the existing slums by providing basic amenities like water supply, sewers, storm water drains, community bath and latrines, widening and paving of existing path-ways, street lighting etc. A scheme entitled 'Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums' (EIUS) was included in the State Sector Plan. The scheme of (EIUS) was introduced in 1972 as CSS (Centrally Sponsored Scheme) and later it was transferred to the State Sector in 1974. The Centre provided a subsidy on the slum improvement programmes. The EIUS, envisages improvement of living standard of the people in slum areas. The scheme has the following components:

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| (i) | Water Supply | - | One tap for 150 persons |
| (ii) | Sewer | - | Open drains with normal outflow |
| (iii) | Storm water drains | - | To quickly drain out storm water |
| (iv) | Community baths | - | One bath for 20 to 50 persons |
| (v) | Community latrines | - | One latrine for 20 to 50 persons |
| (vi) | Street lighting | - | One pole 30 meters apart |
| (vii) | Widening and paving of existing lanes | - | to make room for easy flow of pedestrians, bicycles and hand carts on paved paths to avoid mud and slush. |

Some additional activities have also been added to the scheme. These include (i) community facility as community centre, common work sheds-cum-raw materials depot for poor, common retail outlets for beneficiaries, municipal service centres; (ii) garbage disposal; and (iii) maintenance.

16.3 **Progress during 2003-2004:-** During the year 2003-2004, the overall achievement was coverage of 49.96 lakh persons constituting 136% as against the annual targets of 36.70 lakh persons. A statement indicating State-wise/UT-wise performance is given at *Annexure - 16.1*. The State-wise performance during this year has been 'Very Good' in respect of States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Pondicherry, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttaranchal, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and A&N Island. The performance made by the only State of Chhatisgarh has been 'Good'. The performance of rest of the States has been 'Poor'.