

Manual scavengers

629. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 13 lakh manual scavengers carry, dispose off human excreta as on date as per reports that appeared in the press;

(b) if so, who is responsible for violation of the Act of Parliament, the Employment of Manual Scavengers and construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act notified in 1997; and

(c) the steps that are being taken by the Central Government to eradicate this inhuman practice?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) started in January 2007 aims at rehabilitation of remaining manual scavengers and their dependents. As per the latest available information received from State Governments, there are about 1.15 lakh beneficiaries eligible for assistance under SRMS.

(b) In order to stop the practice of Manual Scavenging, the Parliament has enacted Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act 1993, which provides for penalties for contravention of the provisions of the Act. There are provisions under the Act 1993 i.e. Section - 3(1) of the Act which prohibits employment of the manual scavengers and construction or maintaining a dry latrine and appoint and notify Executive Authority Under Sub Section (1) of Section 5 of the Act. The Executive Authority thus appointed as far as practicable, try to rehabilitate and promote the welfare of the persons who were engaged in or employed for as manual scavengers.

(c) In order to eradicate the practice of manual scavenging, the following steps are being taken by the Central Government:-

(i) Legislative back up to prohibit construction of dry latrines and employment of manual scavengers in the form of "The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993".

(ii) Implementation of revised guidelines of centrally sponsored Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Scheme (ILCS) which envisages conversion of all existing dry latrines into twin pit pour flush latrines.

(iii) Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) which aims to assist the remaining scavengers and their dependents for rehabilitation by providing training, loan and subsidy for undertaking self employment ventures.

Housing Facility

630. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has formulated any action plan for providing more housing facility particularly to the lower and middle income groups; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) and (b) 'Land' and 'Colonisation' being State subjects, it is primarily the responsibility of State Governments to provide for adequate shelter. However, the Union Government has formulated the first urban area focused National Urban Housing & Habitat Policy 2007 to set in motion a process in providing 'Affordable Housing for All' particularly the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG).

This policy intends to promote sustainable development of habitat in the country with a view to ensuring equitable supply of land, shelter and services at affordable prices to all sections of society.

Apart from this, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), launched by the Government in the year 2005 caters to provision of housing and basic services to urban poor in 65 specified cities under the Sub Mission Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and in other cities and towns under the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP). A total of 461 projects under Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and 839 projects under Integrated Housing & Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) have been approved all over the country so far envisaging construction/upgradation of 993523 and 461887 dwelling units respectively.

A new scheme - Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP) has been launched for providing Interest subsidy on housing urban poor to make the housing affordable and within the repaying capacity of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) / Low Income Group (LIG). The scheme encourages poor sections to avail of loan facilities through Commercial Banks/Housing Finance Companies for the purposes of construction/acquisition of houses and avail 5% subsidy in interest payment for loans upto Rs.1 lakh.

Further, the newly launched Scheme of Affordable Housing in Partnership would cover Middle Income Group (MIG) dwelling units also. Central Government assistance under this scheme will be provided for the provision of civic services such as water supply including ground level/overhead service reservoirs, storm water drainage, solid waste management, sewerage including common sewerage treatment facilities, rain water harvesting, approach roads, electricity lines including electricity transformers, parks and playgrounds and other amenities.

Projects in cities under BSUP

631. SHRI R.C. SINGH: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of cities in the State of West Bengal selected under the Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) under JNNURM;

(b) the details of projects undertaken and funds provided since implementation of the scheme in December, 2005; and