

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -2695**  
ANSWERED ON - 18/12/2024

**DEATHS DUE TO MANUAL SCAVENGING**

2695. SHRI MALLIKARJUN KHARGE  
SHRI NARAIN DASS GUPTA

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether Government has taken cognisance of recent media reports about deaths caused by manual scavenging across the country, and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (b) the State-wise number of deaths reported due to manual scavenging or hazardous sewer work over the last five years;
- (c) the measures being implemented to ensure the prohibition of manual scavenging and prevent such fatalities; and
- (d) whether Government plans to reintroduce or expand schemes for the rehabilitation of manual scavengers, and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a) & (b) No death has been reported due to Manual Scavenging which is lifting of human excreta from Insanitary latrines.

Deaths have occurred in State/UTs due to hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and non observance of safety precautions as prescribed under the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 and MS Rules, 2013".

As per information provided by States/UTs the details of sanitation workers who have lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks during last five years and current year are at **Annexure**.

(c): As per the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)" manual scavenging is a banned activity in the country with effect from 6.12.2013. No person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging from the above date. Any person or agency who engages any person for manual scavenging is in violation of the provisions of the MS Act, 2013 and is punishable under Section 8 of the above Act, with imprisonment upto 2 years or fine upto Rs. One Lakh or both.

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in convergence with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs with an objective to ensure safety and dignity to Safai Karmacharis and to empower them socially and economically has formulated the “National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)” Scheme, which was launched in 2023-24 for its implementation in all 4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the country. The aim of the scheme is to achieve the following:-

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- All sanitation work to be performed by skilled workers
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter
- Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers
- Strengthening and capacitating Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) to ensure safe delivery of mechanized sanitation services.
- Empowering of Sanitation workers to run sanitation enterprises and promote mechanization of cleaning operation through availability of machines.

The scheme formalizes SSWs by profiling them and ensure safe cleaning by providing capacity building occupational training and mechanized equipment and health insurance.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has issued the following advisory:-

- (i) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cleaning of Sewer or Septic tank.
- (ii) Advisory for technical and managerial interventions for ensuring safety during sewer and septic tank cleaning through Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU).
- (iii) Ready Reckoner for Urban Local Bodies for ensuring safety of sanitation workers.
- (iv) Organising Safaimitra Suraksha Shivirs nationwide through ULBs to provide health checkups and linkage to social welfare schemes.

(d) The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing “National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)” Scheme. The nomenclature of Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) has been changed to NAMASTE which includes existing components of SRMS. The following rehabilitation has been provided to identified manual scavengers:-

- a. One-time Cash Assistance of Rs. 40,000/- per family provided to all identified and eligible 58,098 manual scavengers.
- b. Capital Subsidy upto Rs. 5,00,000/- has been provided to 2,541 manual scavengers and their dependents to take up alternate self employment projects.
- c. Skill Development Training has been provided to 24,294 identified manual scavengers and their dependents with a stipend @ Rs. 3,000/- per month during the training period.
- d. Health Insurance under Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to the families of all the identified manual scavengers.

\*\*\*\*\*  
-2-

Annexure referred in reply to parts (a) and (b) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2695 for answer on 18.12.2024 regarding Deaths due to manual scavenging.

Details of death of persons in sewers and septic tanks during last five years and current year (As on 31.10.2024)

| Sl. No. | Name of States/UTs   | No. of deaths of persons |
|---------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1       | Andhra Pradesh       | 5                        |
| 2       | Bihar                | 4                        |
| 3       | Delhi                | 34                       |
| 4       | Dadra Nagar & Haveli | 3                        |
| 5       | Goa                  | 1                        |
| 6       | Gujarat              | 49                       |
| 7       | Haryana              | 51                       |
| 8       | Jharkhand            | 4                        |
| 9       | Karnataka            | 21                       |
| 10      | Maharashtra          | 63                       |
| 11      | Madhya Pradesh       | 11                       |
| 12      | Odisha               | 2                        |
| 13      | Punjab               | 11                       |
| 14      | Rajasthan            | 24                       |
| 15      | Tamil Nadu           | 67                       |
| 16      | Telangana            | 8                        |
| 17      | Uttar Pradesh        | 49                       |
| 18      | Uttarakhand          | 1                        |
| 19      | West Bengal          | 11                       |
|         | <b>Total</b>         | <b>419</b>               |

\*\*\*\*\*