

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -2201
ANSWERED ON - 19/03/2025

DEATH OF SANITATION WORKERS

2201. MS DOLA SEN

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

- (a) whether Government has actively taken measures to prevent death of manual scavengers and sanitation workers, if so, the details of the measures taken during the last two years;
- (b) the number of deaths of sanitation workers at work reported during the last two years, State-wise/UT-wise;
- (c) whether Government has fulfilled the 2023 Union Budget promise of 100 per cent mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers in all cities and towns;
- (d) if so, the details of the target planned and achieved and funds spent in this regard; and
- (e) if not, reasons for the delay and by when Government plans to implement the same?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a) 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".

To tackle hazardous cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tank, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in convergence with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the "National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)" Scheme in 2023-24 for implementation in all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the country. The objective is to ensure safety and dignity of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and empower them socially and economically. The achievements of NAMASTE scheme are as under:-

- 66,961 Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) have been validated across 34 States/UT. For Odisha and Tamil Nadu the process for integrating available data into central NAMASTE data base has been initiated.
- 45,292 PPE kits to SSWs & 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units have been supplied/ordered.
- Ayushman cards have been made available to 15,160 beneficiaries.
- Capital Subsidy of Rs.17.23 Crore released to 599 sanitation workers and their dependents for sanitation related projects.
- Capital Subsidy of Rs. 4.04 Crore released for 273 beneficiaries and their dependents belonging to Manual Scavenger category under NAMASTE to take up alternate self employment projects.
- 1000 workshops have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks in Municipal Corporation/Municipality/Nagar Palika and other such organization engaging Sewer and septic tank cleaning workers since FY 2023-24.

(b) As per information provided by National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), 113 persons have lost their lives during last two years i.e. 2023 and 2024, due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks. State/UT-wise details are at **Annexure**.

(c) to (e) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has informed that Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 was launched on 1st, October, 2021. It includes a new component i.e. Used Water Management (UWM) with one of the objectives of eradication of hazardous entry into sewers and septic tanks and promotion of mechanized cleaning operations of the same. Central share funds for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with population less than 1 lakh are released to achieve the above objective for (i) procuring adequate numbers of septic tank desludging equipments; (ii) setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants(STPs)/ STP-cum- Fecal Sludge Treatment plants FSTP; for used water treatment; (iii) laying Interception and Diversion (I&D) structures including provision of pumping stations and pumping main/gravity main upto STP, etc.

Under SBM-U 2.0, funds to the tune Rs. 15926.55 crores have been allocated under UWM component to the States/UTs of which Rs. 3122.71 crores have been released till date.

The Government of India's flagship initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Mission, AMRUT aim to improve sanitation infrastructure thus improving working condition of sanitation workers.

MoHUA has developed a Model Contract for engagement of Private Service Operators by ULBs which emphasizes on safety protocol responsibility and penalties for respective stakeholders. A National level competition titled "Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge (SSC)" was launched by MoHUA on 19th November 2020. The overall objective was to ensure zero

human casualty from hazardous entry, by ensuring elimination of manual entry into sewers and septic tanks. In cases, where manual entry is unavoidable, to do so outfitted with Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and safety kits, with adequate approval, training and supervision. The focus areas of the Challenge for all participating cities across all States/ UTs were the following:

- (i). thrust on mechanized cleaning of sewers & septic tanks
- (ii). availability of protective gears & equipment in case manual entry is unavoidable.
- (iii). creation of conducive eco-system through:
 - Trained workforce;
 - 24x7 helpline, with large scale citizen outreach,
 - Empaneling of private operators

MoHUA launched a SafaiMitra Surakshit Shehar protocol for all ULBs. 3,343 ULBs have declared themselves SafaiMitra Surakshit Shehar.

Over 3000 Urban Local Bodies have reported having adequate machinery for 100 % mechanized cleaning.

Further, Sanitation is a State subject under 7th schedule of the constitution, it is the responsibility of State/ULBs to plan, design, execute and operate sanitation projects in the urban areas of the country. States are encourage to procure/lease necessary equipments to achieve 100 % mechanization as announced in 2023-24 budget speech. Under SBM 2.0, MoHUA has sanctioned Rs. 371 crore to 26 States/UTs for procuring 2585 desludging vehicles.

Annexure

Annexure referred in reply to part (b) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2201 for answer on 19.03.2025 regarding Death of Sanitation Workers.

Statement of sewer/septic tank death last two year (Calender year wise)

S.No	Name of State/UT	2023	2024
1	Bihar	2	0
2	Delhi	0	7
3	Goa	0	1
4	Gujarat	10	0
5	Haryana	6	1
6	Jharkhand	1	0
7	Karnataka	3	2
8	Madhya Pradesh	2	3
9	Maharashtra	10	9
10	Punjab	6	1
11	Rajasthan	10	7
12	Tamil Nadu	8	6
13	Telangana	1	3
14	Uttar Pradesh	1	10
15	West Bengal	3	0
	Total	63	50

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