GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †2863
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2020

REPORT BY NCSK ON MANUAL SCAVENGERS DEATH

†2863. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR:

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

(a) whether Government is aware of the data released by National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) in which it is stated that on an average one sanitation worker dies every fifth day during cleaning sewer or septic tank since 2017;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the absence of appropriate enforcement of law enacted for rehabilitation of manual scavengers, this situation is turning scary day-by-day; and

(c) if so, whether Government would take concrete action for due changes and for emancipating this class of the society from this curse by removing the enforcement related drawbacks?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a): Supreme Court of India in its verdict dated 27.03.2014 in Civil Writ Petition No. 583 of 2003 Safai Karamchari Andolan Vs Union of India and Others had directed the States and Union Territories to identify all the cases of death of persons in Sewers and Septic Tanks that have occurred since 1993 and pay compensation of Rs. 10 lakh each to the families of the victims of such deaths. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis have requested the States and Union Territories to furnish monthly reports of such cases. Details of such cases that have occurred since 2017 as identified and reported by the States are given in the **Annexure** and therefore it would be incorrect to deduce that on an average one sanitation worker dies every fifth day during cleaning sewer or septic tank since 2017.

(b) and (c): Manual scavenging as well as hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks are prohibited under Prohibition of Employmentas Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013). Engagement of persons either for manual scavenging or hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is cognizable offence and is punishable with fine and imprisonment. Government have also notified "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Rules, 2013 (MS Rules 2013)" under which manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is permissible in exceptional cases where mechanized cleaning is not possible and such permission can be given only by the Chief Executive Officer of the Municipality for the reasons to be recorded in writing. In such cases, the employer who engages persons for manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks is required

to provide safety gear and equipment and ensure safety precautions prescribed under the Rules. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs have circulated the Standard Operating Procedure for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks to all States and Union Territories. In addition, National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) organizes workshops in municipalities for engineers, sanitary inspectors, sanitary workers and contractors on safe cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and also create awareness about the provisions of MS Act, 2013 and "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Rules, 2013 (MS Rules 2013)" regarding employer's obligations to provide safety gear/equipment and ensure safety precautions. 524 such workshops have been organized from 02nd October, 2018 to 04.03.2020. An action plan has been formulated for mechanization of cleaning of sewers, septic tanks and septage in consultation with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The Action Plan envisages appointment of Responsible Sanitation Authority and setting up of well equipped Sanitation Response Unit in each district to ensure mechanical conveyance for desludging as well as cleaning of sewer/septic tanks.

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Annexure referred in reply to part (a) of Rajya Sabha unstarred question No. 2863 for answer on 18.03.2020 regarding Reported by NCSK on manual scavengers death.

Details of cases of death of persons died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks and First Information Reports and compensation paid to the families as reported by the States to National Commission of Safai Karamcharis of during the last three years.

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	2017	2018	2019 (upto 31.12.2019)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2	9	2
2.	Bihar	6	6	0
3.	Chattisgarh	0	1	0
4.	Chandigarh	3	0	0
5.	Delhi	13	10	8
6.	Goa	0	0	0
7.	Gujarat	7	2	16
8.	Haryana	11	6	14
9.	Kerala	1	0	0
10.	Karnataka	4	1	7
11.	Maharashtra	4	7	17
12.	Punjab	4	2	3
13.	Rajasthan	6	2	5
14.	Tamil Nadu	7	9	15
15.	Telengana	0	2	0
16.	Uttar Pradesh	18	11	21
17.	West Bengal	7	0	2
	Total	**93**	**68**	**110**