

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -775
ANSWERED ON - 26/07/2023

HEALTH AND LIFE TERM INSURANCE FOR SAFAI KARAMCHARIS

775 SMT. SUMITRA BALMIK

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

- (a) whether any State-wise data of Safai Karamcharis is being maintained across the country, if so, details thereof;
- (b) whether any advisory have been issued by the Centre to States regarding provision of safety equipment, health benefits, family benefits to be given to Safai Karamcharis, if so, details thereof;
- (c) whether Safai Karamcharis are insured under health and life term insurance, if so, details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government to promote mechanisation in the sector?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a): No, Sir. No such database is maintained centrally by the Government.

(b) and (c): The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenger and their Rehabilitation Rules, 2013 provides about safety precaution, equipment and life insurance of Rs. 10 lakh which is applicable in all states.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cleaning of sewer and septic tanks and an Advisory for Technical and Managerial Interventions for ensuring safe cleaning operations have been issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in November, 2018 and 2019 respectively.

(d): The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenger and their Rehabilitation Act 2013, which has come into force w.e.f. 06.12.2013, bans manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. Further, Government has taken the following initiatives to promote mechanized cleaning of sewers and septic tanks:-

- i. Under Swachhta Udyami Yojana of NSKFDC, concessional loans are provided to safai karamcharis, manual scavengers & their dependants and the Urban Local Bodies & other agencies responsible for cleaning for procurement of sanitation related instruments/vehicles for complete mechanization of all cleaning operations.
- ii. Under Central Sector Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) in addition to the manual scavengers, the sanitation workers and their dependants are also provided capital subsidy upto Rs. 5.00 lakh for procurement of instruments/vehicles for mechanized cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- iii. Workshops are organized in municipalities with the officers, engineers, contractors, sanitation workers etc. of urban local bodies to sensitize them about safe and healthy cleaning practices and mechanized cleaning of sewers & septic tanks. About 203 such workshops have been organized in the F.Y. 2022-23 in various urban local bodies (ULBs) pan India.
- iv. A short duration training programme (RPL) is organized for the sanitation workers wherein they are trained in mechanized cleaning, safe & healthy cleaning practices, safety precautions, use of PPE kits. Such training has been provided to about 26946 sanitation workers in F.Y. 2021-22 and 2022-23 PAN India.

To tackle hazardous cleaning specially, the Government of India has formulated a new scheme called National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) whose objectives are as under:-

- i. Formalization and Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (MS) and Persons Engaged in Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tank (SSWs).
- ii. Promotion of safe and mechanised cleaning of sewers and septic tanks through trained and certified sanitation workers.

NAMASTE aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- a. Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- b. All sanitation work to be performed by formalized skilled workers
- c. No sanitation workers to come in direct contact with human faecal matter
- d. Strengthening and capacitating Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) to ensure safe delivery of mechanized sanitation services
- e. Sanitation workers are collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises
- f. Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) and their dependents also have access to livelihoods by providing capital subsidy for purchase of sanitation related equipments.
- g. Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered Private Sanitation Service Organizations (PSSOs) and skilled & certified sanitation workers only.
- h. Extending Health Insurance Scheme benefits under AB-PMJAY to SSWs & manual scavengers and their family members.
- i. Occupational safety training to SSWs.
