

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -3005
ANSWERED ON - 26/03/2025

BEGGAR FREE ZONES

3005. SMT RENUKA CHOWDHURY

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

- (a) whether the total number of beggars has increased from 4.1 lakh beggars as per Census 2011, if so, the total number of children involved in the act of begging across the country, State-wise;
- (b) the total number of beggar-free zones declared across the country during the last five years;
- (c) whether the rehabilitation of beggars involved any training or education in order to declare any place as beggar-free zone, if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken by Government to prevent children from begging?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(DR. VIRENDRA KUMAR)

- (a) As per the Census of 2011, there are 4,13,670 beggars/ destitute/ homeless/ vagrants in the Country. Thereafter, no census has been conducted.
- (b) The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the Sub Scheme 'Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the act of Begging ' of the Central Sector Scheme "SMILE" (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise) since 2023. As of now, no city/area has been declared as beggar free under the Scheme.
- (c) The focus of the Scheme is on providing essential support such as medical care, food, shelter, counseling, and rehabilitation through skill development and education with the objective of making the country beggar free.
- (d) To prevent children from begging, the government follows a rehabilitative approach. Children found begging are either reunited with their families, enrolled in Anganwadi centers or schools, or placed under the care of District Child Welfare Committees (CWCs). These measures aim to provide them with a stable environment, education, and necessary support to break the cycle of begging.
