

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO -448
ANSWERED ON – 03/12/2025

STATUS OF HAZARDOUS CLEANING IN THE COUNTRY

448 MS SWATI MALIWAL

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

- (a) the number of deaths reported, State-wise and year-wise, over the last five years due to hazardous cleaning activities, including manual scavenging;
- (b) the number of inspections conducted, violations detected for non-provision of protective gear and actions taken against negligent contractors or employers;
- (c) whether Government acknowledges that manual scavenging continues under the guise of hazardous cleaning despite Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSARA);
- (d) whether there is any proposal to expand the legal definition of manual scavenging to include hazardous cleaning; and
- (e) the measures being taken to monitor, prevent and eradicate such disguised practices across the States?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

- (a) No death has been reported due to manual scavenging.

Deaths have occurred in States/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” and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

As per information provided by National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), State-wise and year-wise details of sanitation workers who lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks during last five years is at **Annexure**.

- (b) Sanitation is a State subject under VIIth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

No such information is maintained Centrally.

(c) As per Sections 2(d) and 2(g) of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013", manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning are two different terms. The definition of Hazardous Cleaning and Manual Scavengers is as follows:-

Sections 2(d):

"Hazardous Cleaning" by an employee, in relation to a sewer or septic tank, means its manual cleaning by such employee without the employer fulfilling his obligations to provide protective gear and other cleaning devices and ensuring observance of safety precautions, as may be prescribed or provided in any other law, for the time being in force or rules made thereunder.

Sections 2(g):

"Manual Scavenger" means a person engaged or employed by an individual or a local authority or a public or private agency, for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from insanitary latrines is disposed of, or on a railway track or in such other spaces or premises, as the Central Government or a State Government may notify, before the excreta fully decomposes in such manner as may be prescribed, and the expression "manual scavenging" shall be construed accordingly.

(d) At present there is no such proposal.

(e) No report of the practice of manual scavenging has been received from States/UT.

Various provisions of "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013) stipulates for constitution of following Commission/Committee for monitoring and effective implementation of the Act:-

- i. Constitution of Central Monitoring Committee, State Level Monitoring Committee and Vigilance Committee at District and Sub-Division Level to monitor the implementation of the Act.
- ii. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) is mandated to monitor implementation of various provisions of the MS Act, 2013.
- iii. State Government may, by notification, designate a State Commission for Safai Karamcharis or a State Commission for the Scheduled Castes or such other statutory or other authority to monitor the implementation of various provisions of the MS Act, 2013.

To tackle hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks, various efforts have been made by coordinating Ministries.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 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 sustaining elimination of manual cleaning, through mechanization of sewer and septic tank cleaning operations.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has also issued the following advisory for safe cleaning of sewer and septic tanks:-

- 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 (ULBs) for ensuring safety of sanitation workers.
- iv. Organising Safaimitra Suraksha Shivirs nationwide through ULBs to provide health checkups and linkage to social welfare schemes.

State Governments and Union Territories are to ensure implementation of the various provisions of the Act and to ensure mechanised cleaning.

Annexure referred in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 448 for answer on 03.12.2025 regarding status of hazardous cleaning in the country.

State-wise and year-wise details of sewer/septic tank death during last five years (Calendar year wise)

S. No	Name of State/UT	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
		No. of death	No. of death	No. of death	No. of death	No. of death
1	Andhra Pradesh	0	2	3	0	0
2	Bihar	0	0	0	2	0
3	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	3	0	0	0
4	Delhi	4	4	10	0	7
5	Goa	0	0	0	0	1
6	Gujarat	5	5	7	10	0
7	Haryana	1	6	23	6	1
8	Jharkhand	3	0	0	1	0
9	Karnataka	5	7	0	3	2
10	Madhya Pradesh	0	5	0	2	3
11	Maharashtra	4	7	19	10	14
12	Odisha	0	2	0	0	0
13	Punjab	0	2	0	6	1
14	Rajasthan	1	1	0	10	7
15	Tamil Nadu	16	3	14	9	6
16	Telangana	0	4	1	1	3
17	Uttar Pradesh	0	5	11	2	9
18	Uttarakhand	0	0	0	0	0
19	West Bengal	0	6	0	3	0
	Total	39	62	88	65	54

Note: This compiled data is based on the information received by NCSK from Distt. Authorities/ Police Authorities/ State Departments etc. This is a dynamic data which keeps changing / updated upon receipt of fresh information by the Commission.
