

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 4278
ANSWERED ON – 01/04/2026

SAFETY AND WELFARE OF SANITATION WORKERS

4278. SHRI RAGHAV CHADHA

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

- (a) the data on sanitation workers engaged in hazardous cleaning activities and the number of occupational fatalities reported during the last five years;
- (b) the details of implementation of mechanisation initiatives and the provision of personal protective equipment to sanitation workers; and
- (c) the details regarding access of sanitation workers, particularly those engaged in sewer and septic tank cleaning, to health insurance, preventive and curative healthcare services?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a) The identification and profiling of sanitation workers who were engaged in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks has been undertaken under National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme. 89,248 SSWs have been profiled and validated.

As reported by National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), 317 sanitation workers have lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of Sewer and Septic tank during the last five years (2021 to 2025).

(b) National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme to ensure safety and dignity of sewer and septic tank workers (SSWs) has been launched in 2023-24. Measures taken to enhance worker safety and promote mechanization under NAMASTE scheme are as under:-

- i. Personal Protective Equipment Kits to SSWs.
- ii. Occupational safety training to SSWs.
- iii. Safety devices to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) in larger Urban Local Bodies.
- iv. Upfront Capital Subsidy for sanitation related machinery to sanitation workers, their groups of maximum five persons and Private Sanitation Service Operators (PSSOs).
- v. Workshops on prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

PPE Kit comprising the following items is provided to SSWs identified under the scheme:-

- Safety Helmet with Ratchet
- Safety Eye Wear
- N95 Particulate Respiratory Mask
- Face Mask with Multipurpose Filter Cartridge
- Nitrile Gloves
- Safety Shoes
- Body Suit

In addition, Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 launched on 1st October, 2021 includes a new component i.e. Used Water Management (UWM) with one of the objectives as eradication of hazardous entry into sewers and septic tanks and sustaining elimination of manual cleaning, through mechanization of sewer and septic tank cleaning operations.

(c) SSWs under NAMASTE are facilitated for coverage under the Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), which provides health insurance benefits. 75,710 SSWs have been covered under Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), State Health Schemes and NAMASTE scheme.
