

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 1250
ANSWERED ON – 29/07/2026

PERSONS ENGAGED IN MANUAL CLEANING OF SEWERS AND SEPTIC TANKS

1250. SHRI DEREK O' BRIEN

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

- (a) whether Government has conducted surveys to identify persons engaged in manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks across the country and State-wise deaths due to the same;
- (b) whether Government has assessed the effectiveness of existing laws and schemes, including the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act and the NAMASTE scheme, in eliminating manual scavenging and rehabilitating affected persons; and
- (c) whether Government proposes to strengthen enforcement, accountability mechanisms and rehabilitation measures, including skill training, alternative employment and compensation to affected families, to ensure eradication of manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)

(a) After the survey, 89,915 Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) have been validated across the country under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme, launched in July 2023.

State-wise death of sanitation workers who lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks during 2025 is at **Annexure**.

(b) The evaluation of the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) scheme has been done in 2025.

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013) stipulate for constitution of the following Commission/Committees for monitoring and effective implementation of the Act:

- i. Central Monitoring Committee, State Level Monitoring Committee and Vigilance Committee at District and Sub-Division Level.
- ii. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) is mandated to monitor implementation of various provisions of the MS Act, 2013.
- iii. State Commission for Safai Karamcharis or State Commission for the Scheduled Castes or such other statutory institution to perform the function of State Commission for Safai Karamcharis.

(c) State Governments and Union Territories have been requested to ensure implementation of the provisions of “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013” and to ensure mechanised cleaning. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) issued Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cleaning of Sewer or Septic tanks.

Measures taken to enhance the worker safety and promote mechanization under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (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).
- iv. Upfront Capital Subsidy for sanitation related machinery to sanitation workers, their groups of maximum five persons and Private Sanitation Service Operators (PSSOs).
- v. Health Insurance coverage.
- vi. Workshops on prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

MoHUA also 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.

Annexure

Annexure referred to in reply to part (a) of the Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1250 for answer on 29.07.2026 regarding 'Persons Engaged in Manual Cleaning of Sewers and Septic Tanks'.

State-wise details of sanitation workers who lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks during 2025 is as under:-

S. No.	Name of State/UT	Total Number of sewer death
1.	Delhi	5
2.	Gujarat	3
3.	Haryana	7
4.	Madhya Pradesh	1
5.	Maharashtra	5
6.	Punjab	3
7.	Rajasthan	3
8.	Tamil Nadu	6
9.	Uttar Pradesh	10
10.	West Bengal	4
	Total	47
