

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO - 2046
ANSWERED ON – 05/08/2026

PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT, 2013

2046. PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA

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

- (a) whether Government has examined the concerns that deaths occurring during sewer and septic tank cleaning are not uniformly recorded as deaths due to manual scavenging due to definitional limitations under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013;
- (b) whether Government proposes to revise the definition or create a separate national category for "sewer and septic tank cleaning deaths" to ensure accurate reporting and accountability; and
- (c) whether a national database of all sanitation-related occupational deaths is proposed to be created and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B.L.VERMA)

(a) As per the provisions of the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013”, manual scavenging is banned activity in country with effect from 06.12.2023. Moreover, as per the provisions of MS Act, 2013, a fresh survey has been conducted in all the districts during 2024-25 in which no manual scavenger has been found. The definition of Hazardous Cleaning and Manual Scavenging as per MS Act, 2013 is as follows:-

Section 2(1) (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;

Section 2(1)(g)

“Manual Scavenger” means a person engaged or employed, at the commencement of this Act or at any time thereafter, by an individual or a local authority or an agency or a contractor, 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 the 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.

(b) At present, there is no such proposal.

(c) Based on the confirmation received from the district authorities regarding sewer deaths, National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK) updates the data on the Website of the Commission.
