

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
LOK SABHA**

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3166
TO BE ANSWERED ON 08.08.2023**

DEATH OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS

**†3166. KUNWAR DANISH ALI:
SHRI KARTI P. CHIDAMBARAM:**

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

- (a) whether it is a fact that only 508 out of a total of 766 districts have declared themselves free from manual scavenging in the country according to the data released by the Ministry and if so, the reasons therefor;
- (b) whether the Government has issued directives to all the States to check manual scavenging practice in the country, if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the States in this regard;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government for employment of manual scavengers;
- (d) whether out of the 308 people that have died from cleaning sewer and septic tanks from 2018-22, the reason for which the majority of them i.e. 52 deaths have occurred in the State of Tamil Nadu;
- (e) whether the Government is aware that the majority of people involved in manual scavenging are from lower castes and the reasons for which the Government isn't taking any steps to increase their social mobility;
- (f) the reasons for which the Union Budget 2023-24 has zero allocation towards the rehabilitation of manual scavengers; and
- (g) the details on the timeline of the implementation of the National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem Scheme which seeks the 100 percent mechanization of sewer-related work?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE)**

- (a) & (b): Data has been collated from 639 districts (as on 02.08.2023) that have reported themselves as manual scavenging-free. Defaulting districts are being vigorously pursued either to declare themselves free from manual scavenging or upload the data of insanitary latrine and manual scavengers associated with it on "Swachhta Abhiyan" mobile app. However, no credible data has been uploaded on the app so far.
- (c): Manual scavenging as defined under Section 2 (1) (g) of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)" is prohibited with effect from 6.12.2013. No person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging from that date.

(d): 330 deaths have occurred in State/UTs, including 51 deaths in Tamil Nadu, during 2018-2022 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”. State Government has been requested to ensure that safety precaution as prescribed in MS Act, 2013, MS Rules, 2013 and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

(e): Manual scavenging is occupation based and not caste based identification. Under Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) Government has provided following rehabilitation benefits to increase their social mobility:-

- a. One-time Cash Assistance of Rs. 40,000/- per family has been provided to all identified and eligible 58098 manual scavengers.
- b. Capital Subsidy upto Rs. 5,00,000/- has been provided to 2313 identified manual scavengers and their dependents to take up alternate self employment projects.
- c. Skill Development Training has been provided to 22294 identified manual scavengers and their dependents with stipend @ Rs. 3,000/- per month during the training period. The successfully trained candidates are also provided Government recognized training certificates and assistance for sustainable employments.
- d. Health Insurance under Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to the families of all the identified manual scavengers.

(f): The nomenclature of the SRMS Scheme has been changed to “National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem” (NAMASTE) and existing components of Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) have been kept as component of NAMASTE Scheme to ensure rehabilitation of manual scavengers as such there is no separate allocation required for rehabilitation of manual scavengers.

(g): Government has formulated a new scheme called ‘National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem’ (NAMASTE) to implement from 01.04.2023 to 31.03.2026 to ensure the following interventions:-

- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- All sanitation work to be performed by skilled workers
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter
- Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers
- strengthening and capacitating Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) to ensure safe delivery of mechanized sanitation services.
- Empowering of Sanitation workers to run sanitation enterprises and promote mechanisation of cleaning operation through availability of machines.

The scheme also formalizes sewer septic tank workers by providing occupational training, safety gears and extension of health insurance under AB-PMJAY to ensure safe cleaning with mechanized equipment and enhancing their dignity.
