

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.879  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.07.2023**

**WELFARE OF SANITATION WORKERS**

**879. SHRI T.R. BAALU:**

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

- (a) whether in the absence of robust implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 manual scavenging has been eradicated mostly in name only and there are regular reports about the grisly deaths of safai karamcharis and sanitation workers while cleaning sewers;
- (b) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government keeping in mind that firmer law enforcement, acknowledgement of caste dynamics, humane and economically sound rehabilitation and truly emancipatory use of technology to deploy cleaning machines that could make a start in fulfilling the constitutional promise of the right to life and dignity; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (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.

Deaths have occurred in State/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”.

To tackle hazardous cleaning specially, the Government has formulated a new scheme called ‘National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem’ (NAMASTE) whose objectives are as under:-

- i. Formalization and Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (MS) and Persons Engaged in Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tank (SSWs).
- ii. Promotion of safe and mechanised cleaning of sewers and septic tanks through trained and certified sanitation workers.

NAMASTE aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- a. Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
- b. All sanitation work to be performed by formalized skilled workers
- c. No sanitation workers to come in direct contact with human faecal matter
- d. Strengthening and capacitating Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) to ensure safe delivery of mechanized sanitation services
- e. Sanitation workers are collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises
- f. Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers (SSWs) and their dependents also have access to livelihoods by providing capital subsidy for purchase of sanitation related equipments.
- g. Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered Private Sanitation Service Organizations (PSSOs) and skilled & certified sanitation workers only.
- h. Extending Health Insurance Scheme benefits under AB-PMJAY to SSWs & manual scavengers and their family members.
- i. Occupational safety training to SSWs.

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