

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2359
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2024**

MANUAL SCAVENGING

2359 DR. SHASHI THAROOR:

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

- (a) the basis on which the Government differentiate between manual scavengers and those indulging in hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks;
- (b) whether the Government has received reports from all districts confirming that they are free of manual scavenging;
- (c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the steps taken by the Government to obtain the update thereof;
- (d) whether there is 100 per cent mechanisation of septic tanks and sewers as claimed in Budget 2023-24; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a): As per Sections 2(d) and 2(g) of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013", the definition of Hazardous Cleaning and Manual Scavengers is as follows:-

“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.

“Manual Scavenger” means a person engaged or employed by an individual or a local authority or a public or private agency, 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 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) and (c): As on 31.07.2024, out of 766 districts in the country, 732 districts have reported themselves as manual scavenging-free.

(d) and (e): Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban 2.0), funds amounting to Rs 371 Cr has been approved for release to States to be provided to smaller towns to acquire the machines and improve their state of mechanization. States have reported to have/access to 5000+ standard septic tank vehicles, 1100+ Hydrovac and 1000+ desilting machines.

The Urban Local Bodies are advised by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to incorporate in their bylaws BIS 2470 standards for septic tanks and enforce the same while giving building permissions. Advisories have also been issued to provide safety gears to workers, provide helpline facilities for emergency desludging, and also take up IEC activities.
