

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2740
TO BE ANSWERED ON 05.08.2025**

REHABILITATION OF HUMANS ENGAGED IN MANUAL SCAVENGING

2740. SHRI T R BAALU:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that manual scavenging has been "eradicated mostly in name" and the workers still known as "safai Karamcharis/Sanitation workers" and their grisly deaths while cleaning sewers, due to lack of robust implementation of the 2013 Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act;
- (b) if so, the steps proposed by the Government to acknowledge their rehabilitation to live life with dignity by enforcing the law firmly; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c): As per provision of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)" manual scavenging is a banned activity in the country with effect from 6.12.2013. No person or agency can engage or employ any person for manual scavenging from the above date. Any person or agency who engages any person for manual scavenging in violation of the provisions of the MS Act, 2013 is punishable under Section 8 of the above Act, with imprisonment upto 2 years or fine upto Rs. One Lakh or both.

No report of the practice of manual scavenging or of death occurring due to manual scavenging has been received from States/UT.

Deaths have occurred in States/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" as well as Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

To tackle hazardous cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tank, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in convergence with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the “National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)” Scheme in 2023-24 for implementation in all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) of the country. The objective is to ensure safety and dignity of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and empower them socially and economically.

The scheme envisages provision of :-

- Distribution of PPE Kits and Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) cards and occupation safety training to the sewer and septic tank workers.
- Safety devices to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)
- Upfront Capital Subsidy for sanitation related machinery to sanitation workers and their groups of maximum five persons.
- Organising Workshops on prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

In addition, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has also issued the following advisory for safe cleaning of sewer and septic tanks:-

- i. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for cleaning of Sewer or Septic tank.
- ii. Advisory for technical and managerial interventions for ensuring safety during sewer and septic tank cleaning through Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU).
- iii. Ready Reckoner for Urban Local Bodies for ensuring safety of sanitation workers.
- iv. Organising Safaimitra Suraksha Shivirs nationwide through ULBs to provide health checkups and linkage to social welfare schemes.
