

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2615
TO BE ANSWERED ON 16.12.2025**

NATIONAL SURVEY CONDUCTED UNDER NAMASTE SCHEME

2615. SHRI BALRAM NAIK PORIKA:

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

- (a) the total number of manual scavengers identified in the country through the National Survey conducted under the NAMASTE scheme till November 2025, State-wise;
- (b) the number of deaths of sewer/septic tank workers reported during cleaning operations since 2019 along with the compensation paid;
- (c) the concrete steps taken to enforce the complete ban on manual entry into sewers/septic tanks and to ensure hundred per cent mechanisation of cleaning operations;
- (d) the number of identified manual scavengers who have been provided rehabilitation assistance, skill training and self-employment loans under the NAMASTE scheme; and
- (e) whether the Government proposes to bring further amendments to the Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, for stricter penalties and time-bound eradication and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

- (a): A Nationwide survey, covering 4800+ Urban Local Bodies, has been conducted for identification of Sewer and Septic Tank workers (SSWs) under NAMASTE scheme and not for identification of Manual Scavengers.
- (b): According to the information provided by the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), 471 sanitation workers have lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks since 2019 (upto 31.10.2025) and full and partial compensation has been paid to the families of 397 and 19 deceased, respectively.
- (c): Section 7 of the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013” prohibits hazardous cleaning of a Sewer or a Septic Tank.

To tackle hazardous cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment in convergence with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs 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 to empower them socially and economically. The aim is also to achieve zero fatality in sanitation work and to ensure that no sanitation worker comes in direct contact with human faecal matter.

Steps taken under NAMASTE scheme to avoid manual entry into sewer and septic tanks and to ensure mechanised cleaning of sewer and septic tanks are as under:-

- i. Safety devices to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs).
- ii. Upfront Capital Subsidy to sanitation workers and Private Sanitation Service Operators (PSSOs) for procurement of sanitation related machine/equipment.
- iii. Occupational Safety training to the sewer and septic tank workers.
- iv. Workshops on prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 on 1st, October, 2021. It includes a new component i.e. Used Water management (UWM) with one of the objectives of eradication of hazardous entry into sewers and septic tanks and elimination of manual cleaning, through mechanization of sewer and septic tank cleaning operations.

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 (ULBs) for ensuring safety of sanitation workers.
- iv. Organising Safaimitra Suraksha Shivirs nationwide through ULBs to provide health check-ups and linkages to social welfare schemes.
- v. Issued protocol for Safai Mitra Surakshit Shehar.

(d): Components of the erstwhile ‘Self-Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)’ have been subsumed in the NAMASTE scheme in 2023-24 and rehabilitation assistance provided to manual scavengers and their dependents under it is given below:-

SI. No.	Components	Number of Beneficiaries
1	Onetime Cash Assistance	58098 (Full saturation)
2	Skill Development Training	27928
3	Capital Subsidy for self-employment project	2652

(e): There is no proposal at present to amend the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)”.
