

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

**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2730
TO BE ANSWERED ON 04.08.2026**

MANUAL SCAVENGERS

2730. SHRI RAHUL GANDHI:

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

- (a) the number of persons identified and engaged in manual scavenging and hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks respectively, State/UT-wise;
- (b) the number of deaths recorded under each category since 2019, and cases where the 30 lakh compensation mandated by the Supreme Court has been paid and cases still pending, year-wise;
- (c) whether the deaths recorded during hazardous cleaning are reconcilable with the repeated replies in Parliament that no death has been reported due to manual scavenging and if so, the reasons for the difference in classification;
- (d) whether any audit of the "nil" self-certifications of manual scavenging submitted by districts has been conducted, if so, the findings and the action taken against inaccurate certification; and
- (e) whether the Government has time-bound targets for complete mechanisation, fresh identification and rehabilitation of affected workers and dependants, 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 the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)", a fresh survey has been conducted in all districts of the country during the year 2024-25 in which no manual scavenger has been found. However, 58,098 Manual Scavengers (MS) have been identified during two earlier surveys conducted in 2013 and 2018. State/ UT-wise number of identified manual scavengers is at **Annexure-I**.

National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme has been launched in July, 2023 to ensure safety and dignity of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). Under the scheme, 89,915 SSWs have been validated across the country. State-wise details of validated SSWs are at **Annexure-II**.

(b) & (c): No death has been reported due to manual scavenging.

As reported by the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK), the number of sanitation workers who lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks, full compensation paid and pending cases from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2026 is at **Annexure-III**.

As per section 21(d) and 21(g) of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013)", the definition of "Manual Scavenging" and "Hazardous Cleaning" is as under:-

Definition of Hazardous Cleaning [Sections 21(d)]:

"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.

Definition of Manual Scavenging [Sections 21(g)]:

"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.

(d) No, Sir. All the districts of the country have completed the survey during the year 2024-25 as per the MS Act, 2013 and declared themselves as manual scavengers' free.

(e) Under the NAMASTE Scheme profiling and validation of SSWs are done. Under the scheme, 89,915 SSWs have been validated across the country. Measures taken to enhance the worker safety and promote mechanization under the NAMASTE scheme are as under:-

- i. Personal Protective Equipment Kits to SSWs.
- ii. Occupational safety training to SSWs.
- iii. Safety devices to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs).
- iv. Upfront Capital Subsidy for sanitation related machinery to sanitation workers and Private Sanitation Service Operators (PSSOs).
- v. Health Insurance coverage.
- vi. Workshops on prevention of hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs also 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 as eradication of hazardous entry into sewers and septic tanks and sustaining elimination of manual cleaning, through mechanization of sewer and septic tank cleaning operations.

Annexure-I

Annexure-I referred to in reply to part (a) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2730 for answer on 04.08.2026 regarding 'Manual Scavengers'.

State/UT-wise number of the manual scavengers identified in the surveys conducted in 2013 and 2018 is as under:-

S. No.	State	Number of identified manual scavengers
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1793
2.	Assam	3921
3.	Bihar	131
4.	Chhattisgarh	3
5.	Gujarat	105
6.	Jharkhand	192
7.	Karnataka	2927
8.	Kerala	518
9.	Madhya Pradesh	510
10.	Maharashtra	6325
11.	Odisha	230
12.	Punjab	231
13.	Rajasthan	2673
14.	Tamil Nadu	398
15.	Uttar Pradesh	32473
16.	Uttarakhand	4988
17.	West Bengal	680
	Grand Total	58098

Annexure-II

Annexure-II referred to in reply to part (a) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2730 for answer on 04.08.2026 regarding 'Manual Scavengers'.

State-wise number of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) validated under the NAMASTE scheme is as under:-

S. No.	States/ UTs	Number of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) Validated
1	Andaman and Nicobar	60
2	Andhra Pradesh	4052
3	Arunachal Pradesh	86
4	Assam	466
5	Bihar	3462
6	Chandigarh	253
7	Chhattisgarh	1465
8	Daman Diu and Dadra Nagar Haveli	116
9	Delhi	3649
10	Goa	250
11	Gujarat	7648
12	Haryana	2677
13	Himachal Pradesh	435
14	Jammu and Kashmir	727
15	Jharkhand	1115
16	Karnataka	6312
18	Kerala	1797
19	Ladakh	21
17	Lakshadweep	86
20	Madhya Pradesh	3836
21	Maharashtra	8782
22	Manipur	185
23	Meghalaya	108
24	Mizoram	143
25	Nagaland	105
26	Odisha	1294
27	Puducherry	243
28	Punjab	4465
29	Rajasthan	4082
30	Sikkim	107
31	Tamil Nadu	6981
32	Telangana	3817
33	Tripura	353
34	Uttar Pradesh	12463
35	Uttarakhand	644
36	West Bengal	7630
	Total	89915

Annexure-III referred to in reply to parts (b) and (c) of the Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 2730 for answer on 04.08.2026 regarding 'Manual Scavengers'.

Year-wise number of sanitation workers who lost their lives due to hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks, full compensation paid and pending cases from 01.01.2019 to 30.06.2026 is as under:-

Year	Total Number of sewer death	Full compensation (Rs. 10 lakh) paid before the judgement of Supreme Court dated 20.10.2023.	Full compensa-tion of Rs.30 lakh paid (w.e.f. 20.10.2023)	Partial compensa-tion paid	Compens-ation not confirmed
2019	132	120	1	3	8
2020	34	31	-	3	-
2021	62	62	-	-	-
2022	88	79	2	5	2
2023	65	42	11	6	6
2024	54	8	32	4	10
2025	47	3	23	1	20
2026 (upto 30.06.2026)	16	-	6	-	10

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