



Government Strengthens Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers Through Mechanisation and Rehabilitation Initiatives

Over 2.71 Lakh PPE Kits Distributed Under NAMASTE Scheme; More Than 1.81 Lakh Sanitation Workers Covered Under Health Insurance

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The Central Government has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring the safety, dignity and socio-economic rehabilitation of sanitation workers through sustained efforts to eliminate hazardous manual cleaning practices and promote mechanised sanitation across the country. Through the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme and rehabilitation measures for identified manual scavengers, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment continues to strengthen occupational safety, livelihood opportunities and social protection for sanitation workers while advancing the objective of safe and dignified sanitation services.

This information was given by the Hon'ble Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, **Ramdas Athawale**, in a written reply to Shri Mallikarjun Kharge.

The Government informed that the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE), launched in 2023, is focused on replacing hazardous manual cleaning practices with mechanised solutions while ensuring the safety and well-being of sewer and septic tank workers and waste pickers. Since the launch of the scheme, **2,71,155 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits** have been distributed to sanitation workers and waste pickers. Simultaneously, **1,023 sanitation workers** have received capital assistance for procuring mechanised cleaning equipment, **20,293 beneficiaries** have undergone occupational safety and skill development training, and **1,81,062 beneficiaries** have been covered under health insurance, significantly strengthening occupational safety and social security for sanitation workers.



The Government further informed that, according to the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis, **332 sanitation workers** lost their lives while undertaking hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning between **1 January 2021 and 30 June 2026**. During this period, full compensation has been paid in **268 cases**, while partial compensation has been provided in **18 cases**. The Government also stated that no reports of injuries to sanitation and waste management workers have been received from the States and Union Territories.

The reply also highlighted the Government's continued efforts towards the rehabilitation of identified manual scavengers. Surveys conducted in **2013 and 2018** identified **58,098 manual scavengers** across the country. Rehabilitation support has been extended through one-time cash assistance, skill development and financial assistance for self-employment. All identified beneficiaries have received one-time cash assistance, while **27,926 beneficiaries** have undergone skill development training and **2,803 beneficiaries** have received capital subsidy for establishing general self-employment projects, enabling sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The Central Government reiterated that it remains committed to ensuring that sanitation workers are able to work in safe, dignified and mechanised environments while receiving comprehensive social protection, skill development and livelihood support. Through sustained investments under the NAMASTE Scheme and rehabilitation initiatives, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment continues to work towards eliminating hazardous manual cleaning practices and improving the quality of life of sanitation workers and their families across the country.

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