



Government Strengthens Comprehensive Rehabilitation and Social Inclusion through SMILE Scheme

Department of Social Justice and Empowerment Comprehensive Rehabilitation, Healthcare, Skill Development and Livelihood Support Extended to Marginalised Individuals

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The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing the **Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise (SMILE)** as an Umbrella Central Sector Scheme aimed at comprehensive rehabilitation and socio-economic empowerment of marginalised individuals. The scheme includes the sub-scheme for **Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging**, with interventions focused on rehabilitation, medical facilities, counselling, education, skill development and livelihood opportunities through an effective convergence approach. The scheme is implemented with the support of State and UT Governments, District Administrations, Urban Local Bodies, Municipal Corporations and other organisations and agencies working in the field.

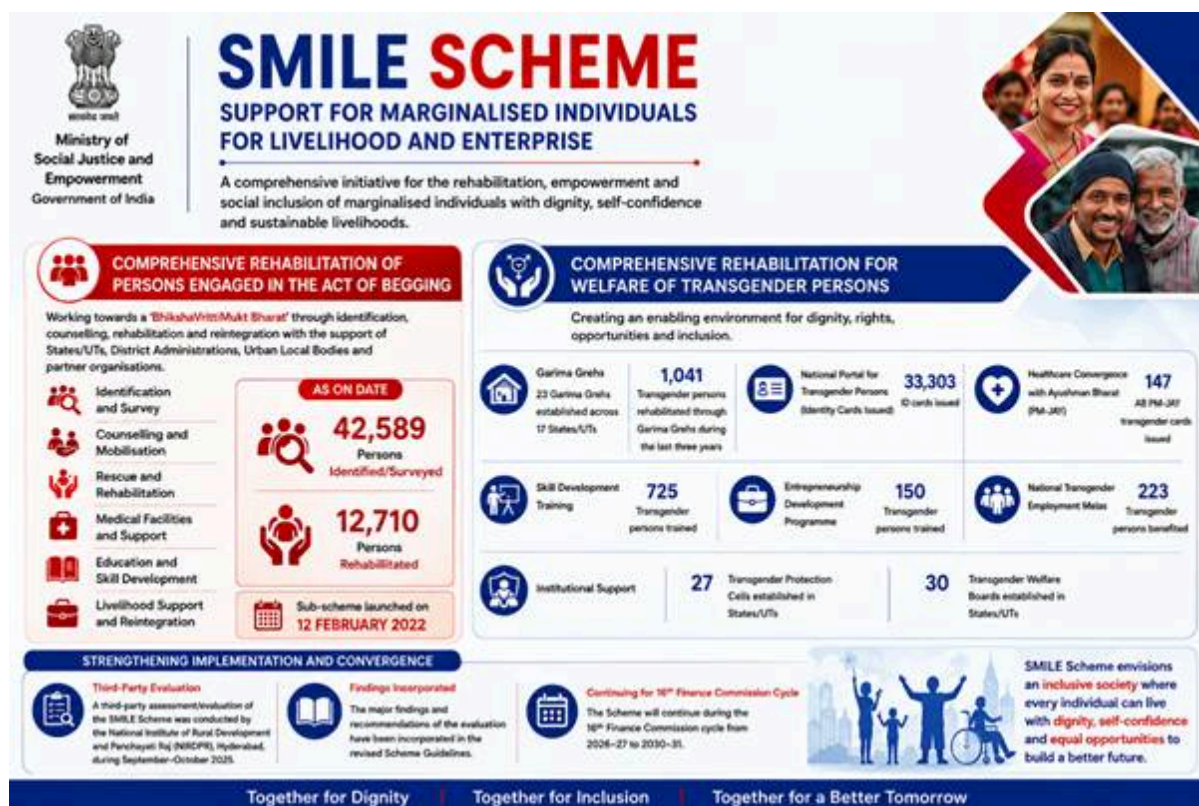
The SMILE Scheme seeks to promote an inclusive society by enabling marginalised individuals to access welfare services, develop skills and livelihood capabilities and reintegrate into mainstream society with dignity and self-confidence. The Government's approach places emphasis on coordinated action and convergence among different stakeholders to ensure that rehabilitation extends beyond immediate support and contributes towards sustainable social and economic reintegration.

Under the sub-scheme for comprehensive rehabilitation of persons engaged in the act of begging, the Ministry has undertaken identification, mobilisation and rehabilitation interventions across the country. As per the latest information available on the official SMILE-BEGGARY portal, **42,589 persons have been identified/surveyed and 12,710 persons have been rehabilitated** under the initiative.

The rehabilitation framework covers a range of support measures, including provision of medical facilities, counselling, education and skill development. These interventions are designed to help beneficiaries acquire capabilities and access opportunities that can support their transition towards sustainable livelihoods and a life of dignity. The implementation framework also promotes convergence with various Government departments and agencies as well as local bodies and organisations working for the welfare and rehabilitation of persons engaged in begging.

The official SMILE-BEGGARY portal states that the sub-scheme was **launched on 12 February 2022** and is being implemented with the objective of making India a **“BhikshaVrittiMukt Bharat”** through comprehensive rehabilitation and coordinated action. The approach seeks to facilitate the reintegration of

persons engaged in begging into mainstream society while strengthening their confidence and access to opportunities.



The broader SMILE framework also includes the **Comprehensive Rehabilitation for Welfare of Transgender Persons** component. Under this component, the Government has established **23 Garima Grehs across 17 States/UTs** to provide shelter and support to destitute transgender persons. During the last three years, **1,041 transgender persons have been rehabilitated through Garima Grehs**. The Government has also undertaken measures relating to healthcare, identity documentation, skill development, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities for transgender persons.

The National Portal for Transgender Persons has been established to facilitate the issuance of transgender certificates and identity cards to eligible persons. The attached official information records **33,303 identity cards issued** through the portal. The Government has also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Health Authority for convergence with Ayushman Bharat, with **147 AB PM-JAY transgender cards issued** as per the information contained in the official document.

The Ministry has further strengthened opportunities for skill development and economic empowerment. **725 transgender persons have received skill development training**, while **150 transgender persons have been trained through an Entrepreneurship Development Programme**. Three National Transgender Employment Melas have also been organised, benefiting **223 transgender persons**.

Institutional mechanisms have also been strengthened to promote protection, welfare and access to Government schemes. **Transgender Protection Cells have been established in 27 States/UTs**, while **30 Transgender Welfare Boards** have been set up by States/UTs to protect the rights and interests of transgender persons and facilitate access to welfare measures.

The Government has also undertaken an independent assessment of the implementation of the SMILE Scheme. A **third-party assessment/evaluation was conducted by the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, during September–October 2025**. The major findings and recommendations of the evaluation have been considered and incorporated into the revised Scheme Guidelines for continuation of the Scheme during the **16th Finance Commission cycle from 2026–27 to 2030–31**.

Through SMILE, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is working towards strengthening an ecosystem of rehabilitation, social protection, healthcare, education, skill development and livelihood support for marginalised individuals. The scheme's convergence-based approach brings together Central and State Governments, local administrations, voluntary organisations, community-based organisations and other stakeholders to create sustainable pathways towards social inclusion and economic empowerment. The overarching objective remains to ensure that marginalised individuals are able to live with dignity, self-confidence and greater opportunities for participation in mainstream society.

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