

**QUESTION DETAILS**

MINISTRY OF : SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

**RAJYA SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 1407

TO BE ANSWERED ON 03.07.2019

Doing away with manual scavenging

1407. Shri G.C. Chandrashekhar

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

(a) whether there are reports of deaths of sanitation workers despite the fact that manual scavenging is prohibited by law in the country, if so, the details thereof and action taken to take away the manual scavenging work from sanitation workers;

(b) whether Government is aware of the increasing incidents of deaths of workers engaged in sewer cleaning, if so, the details of such cases reported during last three years, State-wise; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to do away with manual scavenging by taking lessons from other professions that are modernising themselves with the infusion of technology and skills?

**Answer**

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

(a): There has been no report regarding death of sanitation workers due to manual scavenging. However, there have been reports of death of persons while cleaning sewers and septic tanks. Details of such cases identified and reported by the States as per the directives of the Supreme Court in its judgment dated 27.03.2014 in CWP No. 583 of 2003 are at Annexure-I.

Manual scavenging is prohibited under "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013" (MS Act, 2013) from 06.12.2013, the date of coming into force of the Act. This Act also provides for identification of insanitary latrines and their conversion into sanitary latrines by local authorities so as to eliminate the need for manual cleaning of human excreta from insanitary latrines. Ministries of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Housing & Urban Affairs under Swachh Bharat Mission provide assistance to the States and Union Territories for conversion of insanitary latrines into sanitary latrines in rural and urban areas respectively.

(b): There has been no report regarding the increase of such incidents. However, State-wise details of death of persons in sewers/septic tanks which have come to the notice of the Ministry from individuals and through press reports during the last three years and current year are at Annexure-II.

(c): As mentioned in reply to part (a) above, manual scavenging is prohibited under MS Act, 2013. Under section 33 of the MS Act, 2013, every local authority and other agency is to ensure use of appropriate technological appliances for cleaning of sewers, septic tanks and other spaces within their control with a view to eliminating the need for the manual handling of excreta in the process of their cleaning. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and State Governments have been requested to ensure mechanization of cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs have informed that the sanitary individual household latrines constructed under the Swachh Bharat Mission consist of either an onsite treatment system or a connection to underground sewerage/septage system which would eliminate the need for manual scavenging.

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has informed that under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) it promotes construction of twin leach pit toilets that do not require disposal of human faeces and are cost effective and sustainable. Under this technology, human faeces become manure in 1-2 years and no sewage/drainage system is required.

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