



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation

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Why is in news? The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment organises Eighth Meeting of Central Monitoring Committee to review the Implementation of MS Act 2013

The Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment has chaired the eighth meeting of the Central Monitoring Committee at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, to **review the implementation of the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013"** (MS Act, 2013).

This important Central Act was enacted by the Parliament in **September, 2013** and has come into force in December, 2014

It aims at **complete elimination of the manual scavenging** in its various manifestations and comprehensive rehabilitation of the identified manual scavengers.

During the review meeting discussions were held on the mobile app **"Swachhata Abhiyaan"** launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 24.12.2020 to **capture the data of insanitary latrines still existing and manual scavengers associated with them.**

The app can be downloaded free from the Google Play Store. The Committee noted that anyone can upload information about instances of existence of insanitary latrines or practice of manual scavenging

The Committee noted with satisfaction that every alleged such instance uploaded on the App over the past 3 years had been individually investigated and no evidence of the existence of any insanitary latrines or manual scavenging were found.

The Committee noted that with the conversion of most of the insanitary latrines into sanitary latrines under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the problem of manual scavenging eliminated. Presently there is no evidence of the continuation of the practice of manual scavenging.

All States/Districts have been requested to **declare their district free from manual scavenging**. As on date, such confirmation from 520 districts out of 766 districts in the country has already been received

The Committee was informed that the **main focus** now would be on **ensuring that all activities related to the cleaning sewers or septic tanks are done by using protective gear and mechanical cleaning devices** while ensuring the observance of the requisite safety precautions.

For this purpose, **National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation** has already held 1,177 workshops till date for the staff of municipalities and contractors to sensitize them about mechanized cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and the provisions of MS Act, 2013 and MS Rules, 2013.

Further, to eliminate hazardous cleaning, stop deaths of sewer and septic tank workers and ensure their safety and dignity, **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** have

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jointly formulated a Scheme namely National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE).

The scheme will be implemented **in all 4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** of the country, during the three years up to 2025-26 with an outlay of Rs. 349.70 crore. In order to implement NAMASTE scheme, following actions need to be taken by States/UTs and ULBs:

Sensitization of ULBs for implementation of NAMASTE and follow up.

Ensure nomination of Responsible Sanitation Authority (RSA) in each District.

Ensure setting up of Sanitation Response Unit (RSU) in each large ULB.

Operationalize helpline number in each SRU.

Profiling of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) through MIS portal.

SHG formation of sewer/septic tank workers for sanitation related projects.

Providing work assurance to sanitation workers for Sanitation Related Projects.

Nomination of officers/State Mission Directors at State level/ULB level.

Training of sewer entry professionals and SRU staff.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for sewer entry professionals.

Awareness generation in ULBs.

NAMASTE interventions to be evaluated under Swachchh Servekshan.

Uploading the details of machinery and specialised workers for hazardous cleaning on the portal of ULBs.

The Committee noted the components of the NAMASTE scheme and suggested that the activities be pursued vigorously to ensure that every local authority uses the appropriate technical appliances for cleaning of sewer and septic tanks effectively.

NAMASTE scheme (National Action Plan for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem):

It was launched in 2022 as a **Central Sector Scheme**.

The scheme is being undertaken **jointly** by the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** and aims **to eradicate unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices**.

Objectives:

Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.

All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers.

No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.

Sanitation workers are collectivised into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.

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Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at National, State and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.

National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation:

National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC), a **wholly owned Govt. of India Undertaking** under the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**.

It was set up on **24th January 1997** as a Company "Not for Profit" under **Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956**.

NSKFDC is in operation since October, 1997, as an **Apex Corporation** for the all round socio-economic upliftment of the Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers and their dependants throughout India.

The schemes/programmes of NSKFDC are implemented through State Channelizing Agencies (SCAs) nominated by the State Govts/UT Administrations, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Nationalised Banks.

The financial assistance is provided at concessional rates of interest to the SCAs/ RRBs / Nationalised Banks for onward **disbursement to the target group of NSKFDC**.