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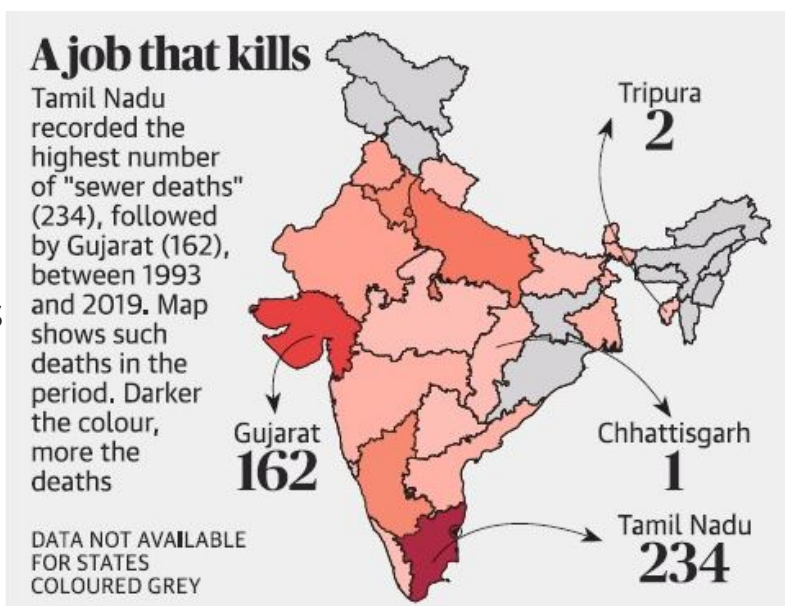
Manual Scavenging in India

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Why in News

- The Central Monitoring Committee to review the implementation of the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013** has mentioned that many states are lagging behind in the rehabilitation of manual scavengers.
- Though most of the sewer death compensation had been paid but **states like Gujarat, Maharashtra is yet to pay compensation.**

Key Points



- **Numerical Analysis:**

Since 1993, a total of 926 deaths related to the manual scavenging is reported in the country, out of which 172 families are yet to receive compensation.

- **State-wise Analysis:**
 - **Engaged Workers:** According to the **National Commission of Safai Karamcharis (NCSK)**, a total of 53,598 people, of which **29,923** were in **Uttar Pradesh alone**, had been identified as **engaged in manual scavenging** after surveys in 2013 and 2018.
 - **Deaths:** **Tamil Nadu** reported the **highest number of deaths** but has paid compensation in all but seven of the 234 cases.
 - **Compensation:** **Gujarat** has the **highest** number of cases where the compensation **amount was not paid followed by Maharashtra.**
- **Steps taken for Elimination:**

Currently, one-time cash assistance, capital subsidy and skill development training are provided to the identified manual scavengers.

Prohibition of Employment of Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

- **Prohibition:** The act prohibits the employment of manual scavengers, manual cleaning of sewers and septic tanks without protective equipment, and the construction of insanitary latrines.
- **Rehabilitation:** It seeks to rehabilitate manual scavengers and provide for their alternative employment.
- **Implementing Authority:** Each local authority, cantonment board and railway authority is responsible for surveying insanitary latrines within its jurisdiction. They shall also construct a number of sanitary community latrines.

The District Magistrate and the local authority shall be the implementing authorities. Offences under the Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable and may be tried summarily.

Reasons for Persistence of Manual Scavenging

- Despite the most stringent penal provisions in the law against manual scavenging, it continues in parts of India largely **due to governmental indifference and social prejudice.**
- The continued presence of insanitary latrines, of which there are about 2.6 million that require cleaning by hand, according to Safai Karmachari Andolan.
- Many communities still regard the presence of a sanitary toilet inside the house as physical pollution.
- The entrenched belief in the **caste system** that assumes people belonging to a particular caste group will readily perform the stigmatised task of emptying latrines.
- The state governments are not keen to demolish and rebuild old facilities lacking sanitation, or conduct a full census of both the latrines and the people engaged in clearing such waste.

National Commission of Safai Karamcharis

- The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK) was constituted on 12th August 1994 as a statutory body by an Act of Parliament viz. 'National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993'.
- The act "The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993" lapsed in February 2004.
- The Commission is acting as a **non-statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** whose tenure is extended from time to time through Government Resolutions.

Source: TH