



NAMASTE Scheme

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Why in News?

On the occasion of **NAMASTE (National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem) Day (16th July)**, the **Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment** inaugurated the **helpline number (14473)** for **waste pickers** and distributed [PPE kits](#) and [Ayushman cards](#) to **Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)** and **Waste Pickers**.

What is the NAMASTE Scheme?

- **About :** NAMASTE is a **human-centric, rights-based initiative** aimed at **eliminating hazardous [manual scavenging](#)** of sewers and septic tanks, launched in **2023** as a **[Central Sector Scheme](#)** for a period of **3 years (2023-24 to 2025-26)**.
 - It replaces the earlier **Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS)**, and covers **4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** across India.
 - The scheme aligns with **UN [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)** such as **SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)**, **SDG 8 (Decent Work)**, and **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequality)**.
- **Implementation:** Jointly launched by the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** and the **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** and being implemented by the **[National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation \(NSKFDC\)](#)**.
- **Objectives:** **Formalizing, rehabilitating, and empowering Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and Waste Pickers**, ensuring their **safety, dignity, and inclusion** through **mechanized sanitation** (no direct contact with human waste or sanitation workers.) **and health protection**.
 - Achieve **zero fatalities** in sanitation work by promoting **trained, certified personnel**, strengthening **Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)**, and encouraging **Sanipreneurship (entrepreneurship in sanitation)** and **SHG formation** among sanitation workers.
- **Key Components:**
 - **For Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs):** Provision of **digital profiling** of **SSWs** employed by **[Urban Local Bodies \(ULBs\)](#)** through a mobile app, provision of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits** and **safety tools**, **occupational safety training** and **skill upgradation**.
 - It also includes **health insurance** under **Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY**, access to **subsidized sanitation vehicles/equipment**, and promotion of **“Sani-preneurship”** through **upfront capital subsidy** and **capacity building** initiatives.
 - **For Waste Pickers (added in 2024):** Focuses on **enumeration and profiling**, supply of **seasonal/need-based PPE kits**, **training in occupational safety** and **skill development**, **[Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY coverage](#)**, and **capital subsidy** for **waste collection vehicles** and **sustainable livelihood projects**.
 - **Institutional Support Mechanisms:** Includes strengthening of **Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs)** for **hazardous sanitation operations** and

conducting **Information, Education & Communication (IEC) campaigns** to promote **awareness, safety, and dignity** of sanitation workers.

What is Manual Scavenging?

- **About:** Manual scavenging refers to the **removal of human excreta** from **dry latrines, public streets, septic tanks, sewers, and gutters**, often carried out **under unsafe and inhumane conditions**.
- **Legal Prohibition:** It is banned under the [Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation \(PEMSR\) Act, 2013](#), which recognizes it as a **dehumanizing practice**.

Schemes Related to Manual Scavenging

- [National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation \(NSKFDC\)](#)
- [Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan](#)
- [Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0](#)
- [The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission \(DAY-NULM\)](#)
- [Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge](#)
- [Swachhta Abhiyan App](#)
- [National Commission for Safai Karamchari](#)
- [Swachhta Udyami Yojana \(SUY\)](#)

How does Caste-Based Occupation Perpetuate Manual Scavenging in India?

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What are the Challenges of Abolition and Rehabilitation of Manual Scavenging in India?

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UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. 'Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan' is a national campaign to (2016)

- (a) rehabilitate the homeless and destitute persons and provide them with suitable sources of livelihood
- (b) release the sex workers from their practice and provide them with alternative sources of livelihood
- (c) eradicate the practice of manual scavenging and rehabilitate the manual scavengers
- (d) release the bonded labourers from their bondage and rehabilitate them

Ans: (c)