



SMILE-75 Initiative

For Prelims: SMILE Scheme, Central Sector Schemes, National Institute of Social Defence, National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation

For Mains: SMILE Scheme for beggars and its significance in enhancing their livelihood, Decriminalization of begging, status of beggars in India

Why in News?

The Government of India has formulated a comprehensive scheme of [SMILE \(Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise\)](#) to address the persisting problem of destitution and beggary.

- Under the “SMILE-75” Initiative, 75 [Municipal Corporations](#) will undertake **comprehensive rehabilitation** of persons engaged in the act of begging in the spirit of [Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav](#).

What do we need to know about the SMILE 75-Initiative?

- **Aim:**
 - Municipal Corporations, in collaboration with [NGOs](#) and other stakeholders will cover several comprehensive welfare measures for **persons who are engaged in the act of begging**, with focus extensively on **rehabilitation**, provision of **medical facilities, counselling, awareness, education, skill development, economic linkages and convergence with other Government welfare programmes etc.**
 - The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has also **allocated a total budget of Rs.100 crore** for the SMILE project for **coming years till 2025-26.**
 - It seeks to develop a **support mechanism** for holistic rehabilitation of those engaged in the act of begging.
- **Implementing Ministry:**
 - **The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- **Components:**
 - **It includes the sub-scheme of:**
 - Comprehensive Rehabilitation of **persons engaged in the act of Begging**
- **Objectives:**
 - To make cities/town and municipal areas **begging-free.**
 - To make a **strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation** of the persons engaged in the act of begging through the coordinated action of various stakeholders.

What is the status of Beggars in India?

- According to the [Census 2011](#), the total number of beggars in India is **4,13,670** (including **2,21,673 males** and **1,91,997 females**) and the **number has increased from the last census.**

- **West Bengal** tops the chart followed by **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** at number two and three respectively. Lakshadweep merely has **two vagrants according to the 2011 census**.
- Among the union territories, **New Delhi had the largest number of beggars** 2,187 followed by 121 in **Chandigarh**.
- Among the northeastern states, **Assam topped the chart** with 22,116 beggars, while **Mizoram ranked low** with 53 beggars.

Source: PIB

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