



National Workshop on SMILE-B

Why in News?

The **Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** organized a **National Workshop and Orientation Programme in Indore**, focusing on the **SMILE-B sub-scheme** aimed at the comprehensive rehabilitation of persons engaged in begging.

Key Points

About SMILE-B

- It is a **sub-scheme of the SMILE initiative** and **aims to build a 'Bhiksha Vritti Mukta Bharat'** by facilitating the **reintegration of persons engaged in begging** into mainstream society with dignity and sustainable support.
 - As of **December 2024**, the scheme has been implemented in **81 cities/towns**, including major pilgrimage, historical, and tourist locations.
 - The next phase aims to expand coverage to 50 additional cities.
 - **As of April 2025**, in India, 9,958 individuals have been identified as engaged in begging.
 - 970 individuals successfully rehabilitated through various scheme interventions.

OBJECTIVES



Make places begging-free and preparing strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation of the persons engaged in the act of Begging



SURVEY AND IDENTIFICATION

Mobilization of the persons engaged in the act of Begging



Provision of a whole range of basic services for the persons engaged in begging such as shelter, rehabilitation, hygiene, food, clothing, bedding, medical facilities, counseling and education



Facilitate skill development training for the persons engaged in the act of Begging so as to ensure their reintegration in mainstream society to lead a life with dignity and self confidence



Sustainable settlement of the persons engaged in the act of Begging.

About National Workshop and Orientation Programme

- The event focused on **rescue operations, primary rehabilitation, and livelihood convergence** for persons engaged in begging.
- The workshop brought together a diverse group of participants, including **State nodal officers, urban local body (ULB) representatives, NGOs, and Civil Society Groups**.
 - They engaged in focused discussions on challenges and best practices in implementing the SMILE-B scheme.

About SMILE Scheme

- Launched in October 2023, the **SMILE Scheme (Support for Marginalized Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** aims to create a 'Bhiksha Vritti Mukh Bharat' (Begging-Free India).
- **Rehabilitation Strategy:**
 - It involves **coordination** with **local bodies for identification**, outreach, and resettlement, with **empathetic engagement** and **profiling through photo/video documentation**.
 - District administrations, **NGOs, SHGs, and Temple Trusts** provide services like counselling, education, and reintegration support.

Begging

- **About:** Begging involves soliciting alms through various acts like singing, selling items, or displaying deformities.
 - **Indore, Madhya Pradesh**, has been declared **India's first beggar-free city** under the **Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat (begging-free India) initiative**.
- **Status: Census 2011** reports **4.13 lakh beggars in India**, with the highest numbers in **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh**.
 - **SECC 2011** estimates 6.62 lakh rural households depend on begging.
- **Constitutional Basis:** Vagrancy (includes beggary) is in the **Concurrent List (Entry 15, List III)**, where both the Centre and the states can legislate.
- **No Central Law:** India **lacks a uniform central law on begging**, and the **Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959**, acts as the main law that criminalizes begging and defines beggars broadly.

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