



Indore Declared India's First Beggar-Free City

Source: [ET](#)

Indore, Madhya Pradesh, has been declared [India's first beggar-free city](#) under the [Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment](#)'s Bhiksha Vriti Mukta Bharat (begging-free India) initiative.

- The achievement, also recognised by the [World Bank](#), follows sustained rehabilitation efforts under the “**Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in the Act of Begging**”, a sub-scheme of [SMILE scheme](#).

Begging

- **About:** Begging involves soliciting alms through various acts like singing, selling items, or displaying deformities.
- **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 Centre and states can legislate.
- **No Central Law:** India **lacks a uniform central law on begging**, and **Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959**, acts as a main law which criminalizes begging and defines beggars broadly.

SMILE Scheme: Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in Begging

- **About:** Launched in **2022**, the [SMILE scheme](#) includes 2 sub-schemes: **Rehabilitation of Persons Engaged in Begging** and **Empowerment of Transgender Persons**.
 - The **beggary sub-scheme** focuses on **identifying, profiling, and rehabilitating individuals** engaged in begging, **with their consent**, in urban areas like religious, historical, and tourist cities.
 - The goal is to rehabilitate **at least 8,000 individuals** from **FY 2023-24 to FY 2025-26**.
- **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.

Read More: [Ban on Begging, Building An Inclusive Society Through SMILE.](#)