



BACKGROUNDERS

Press Information Bureau

Government of India

National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

Empowering Sanitation Workers for safety and dignity.

September 2, 2025

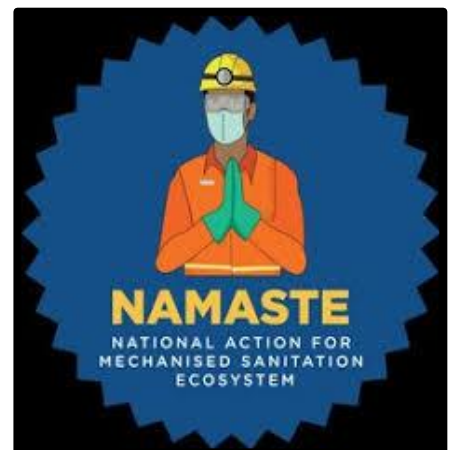
Key Takeaways

- Till August 2025, the NAMASTE scheme has validated **84,902** Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) across the country.
- **45,871** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits have been delivered to SSWs and 354 Safety Device Kits to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) across States and UTs.
- **54,140** beneficiaries have been covered under Ayushman Bharat –PMJAY and State health scheme.
- On World Environment Day 2025, MoSJE, in collaboration with the MoHUA and the NSKFCDC, launched the **Waste Picker Enumeration App**, with the aim to profile 2.5 lakh waste pickers.

Introduction

The **National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)** scheme, launched in July 2023 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), aims **to ensure the safety and dignity of sanitation workers** by preventing hazardous cleaning and promoting safe, mechanized practices through trained and certified workers.

The scheme targets zero fatalities in sanitation work, eliminates direct contact with human faecal matter, ensures all cleaning is done with safety devices by skilled workers, strengthens Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs), and empowers workers through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and entrepreneurship.



The scheme is to be implemented in all **4800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** of the country, during the three years up to **2025-26** with an outlay of **Rs. 349.70 crore**¹.

Key Components of NAMASTE Scheme

¹ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1952044>

- 1) **Profiling of SSWs (Sewer/Septic Tank Workers):** NAMASTE compiles a comprehensive database of SSWs by collecting their details from Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). Detailed profiling is conducted through dedicated profiling camps to gather essential information about SSWs.
- 2) **Occupational Safety Training and PPE Kits Distribution:** SSWs receive training on occupational safety and provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits to ensure their safety during work.

Key Components of NAMASTE Scheme

Profiling of Sewer/Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)

Occupational Safety Training and PPE Kits Distribution

Support for Safety Devices to Sanitation Response Units (SRUs)

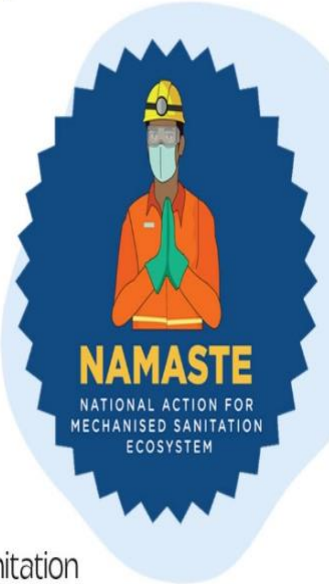

Health Insurance Coverage under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY

Livelihood Support and Enterprise Development

Convergence of MoSJE and MoHUA Programs

Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign

MIS and Dedicated Website

Source: Press Information Bureau

3) **Support for Safety Devices to Sanitation Response Units (SRUs):** SRUs engaged in hazardous cleaning operations are being equipped with necessary safety devices to enhance their safety and efficiency.

4) **Health Insurance Coverage under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY:** Identified SSWs and their families are being enrolled under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to **provide a health safety net**. The premium for those not previously covered, including manual scavengers and SSWs, to be funded through NAMASTE.

5) **Livelihood Support and Enterprise Development:** The Action Plan emphasizes mechanization and entrepreneurship by offering **funding support and capital subsidies** through the National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC). This includes assistance for SSWs, manual scavengers, and their dependents to acquire sanitation-related equipment and vehicles under the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY), fostering their transformation into **Sanipreneurs**. Additionally, capital subsidies for self-employment projects and skill development training (up to two years with a **monthly stipend of Rs. 3,000**) to be provided to identified manual scavengers and their dependents.

6) **Convergence of MoSJE and MoHUA Programs:** NAMASTE aims to enhance coordination between the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to ensure the safety and welfare of

SSWs. The Action Plan integrates financial resources from existing programs like Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (**SRMS**), Swachh Bharat Mission (**SBM**), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (**DAY-NULM**), and National Safai Karamcharis Finance &

Development Corporation (NSKFDC) to provide comprehensive occupational, social, and financial support to SSWs.

- 7) **Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaign:** Extensive awareness campaigns being conducted by ULBs and NSKFDC, utilizing electronic and print media, hoardings at prominent locations, and social media platforms. These campaigns are in local languages, English, and Hindi to maximize outreach and inform SSWs about NAMASTE's interventions.
- 8) **MIS and Dedicated Website:** A robust **Management Information System (MIS)** being implemented, supported by a dedicated NAMASTE website, to ensure effective monitoring and data management of the program's initiatives.

Relevance of NAMASTE Scheme

The NAMASTE scheme is a critical initiative addressing the dire challenges faced by Sewer and Septic Tank Sanitation Workers (SSWs) in India, aiming to transform their occupational safety, health, and dignity through systemic interventions. The **necessity** and **transformative impact** of the NAMASTE scheme can be further exemplified through the following²:



a) Addressing Life-Threatening Occupational Hazards: SSWs are exposed to hazardous waste and extreme occupational risks, including toxic gases and physical dangers, while manually cleaning sewers and septic tanks, often leading to **severe health issues or even loss of life**. The NAMASTE scheme tackles these risks by promoting mechanization, which eliminates direct contact with faecal matter, significantly reducing morbidity and mortality rates. By providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and safety devices through Emergency Sanitation Response Units (ERSUs), the scheme ensures safer working conditions, protecting SSWs from the inherent dangers of their occupation.

b) Promoting Dignity and Social Security: SSWs often work in informal and unregulated conditions, **facing social stigma and lacking access to basic protections** like health insurance or financial stability. NAMASTE introduces transformative change by integrating SSWs into formal systems through profiling, providing health insurance

under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, and offering skill development and livelihood support via initiatives like the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUY). These measures empower SSWs with financial independence, social recognition, and access to welfare schemes, fostering dignity and improving their quality of life.

² <https://socialjustice.gov.in/public/ckeditor/upload/57341728039410.pdf>

- c) **Driving Systemic Change through Mechanization and Convergence:** The reliance on manual scavenging and unsafe practices underscores the urgent **need for systemic reform in sanitation work**. NAMASTE drives transformative change by prioritizing mechanization, equipping ERSUs with modern cleaning equipment, and fostering convergence between the Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). This collaborative approach leverages resources from programs like Swachh Bharat Mission and NSKFDC, ensuring sustainable, technology-driven sanitation practices that protect workers and enhance the efficiency of waste management systems across India.

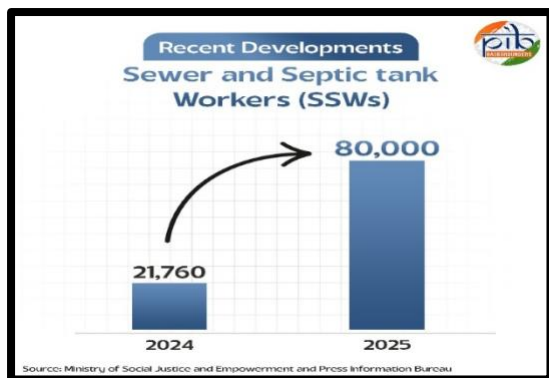
State/UT-wise Status of Implementation of NAMASTE Scheme



STATE/UT	SSWS Validated	PPE Kits to Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSW)	Safety Devices Dispatched to ERSU	Beneficiaries covered under PMJAY, NAMASTE and State Health Scheme	SSY Scheme
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	60	40	1	48	
Andhra Pradesh	3992	2124	25	3422	555
Arunachal Pradesh	86	86	2	56	
Assam	450	308	31	297	
Bihar	3310	2626	22	2603	1
Chandigarh	253	252	1	232	
Chhattisgarh	1465	634	21	1210	
Dadra Nagar Haveli & Daman Diu	116	116	0	97	
Delhi	3645	135	0	1046	
Goa	249	93	2	154	
Gujarat	5470	4295	17	2236	20
Haryana	2627	2193	0	1747	4
Himachal Pradesh	414	180	0	301	
Jammu Kashmir	719	700	2	566	
Jharkhand	1102	707	11	679	
Karnataka	6360	667	19	3695	
Kerala	1755	1589	14	1282	
Ladakh	21	21	2	17	
Lakshadweep	86	86	0	81	
Madhya Pradesh	3337	1908	24	1980	43
Maharashtra	8297	7135	32	3599	
Manipur	175	110	1	159	
Meghalaya	108		0	77	
Mizoram	140	140	0	43	
Nagaland	105	10	4	80	
Odisha	1295	*	0	0	
Puducherry	243	242	2	205	
Punjab	4336	4407	11	3139	
Rajasthan	3867	3299	21	1383	7
Sikkim	107	95	5	94	
Tamil Nadu	6975		0	6975	44
Telangana	3719	1198	15	2214	7
Tripura	350	110	8	232	
Uttar Pradesh	11969	10092	55	6689	26
Uttarakhand	628	119	6	503	
West Bengal	7071	154	0	6999	
Grand Total	84902	45871	354	54140	707

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Key Milestones Achieved



The NAMASTE scheme is revolutionizing the safety and livelihoods of Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) by addressing their occupational hazards and socio-economic challenges through targeted interventions. With 84,902 SSWs validated, the scheme has made significant strides in formalizing their roles and enhancing their well-being.

Key achievements include:

Enhanced Safety Measures: To mitigate the life-threatening risks faced by SSWs, **45,871 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits and 354 Safety Device Kits have been distributed** to Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) across States and Union Territories, promoting safer working conditions and reducing direct exposure to hazardous waste.

Health and Social Security Coverage: The scheme has extended **health insurance to 54,140 SSWs and their families** under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) and State health schemes, providing a critical safety net that ensures access to healthcare and improves their quality of life.

Economic Empowerment through Livelihood Support: A **capital subsidy of Rs. 20.36 crore has been disbursed to 707 sanitation workers and their dependents** for sanitation-related projects, fostering entrepreneurship and financial independence. Additionally, **1,089 workshops** on the prevention of hazardous cleaning have been conducted to promote mechanization and safer practices.

Key Milestones Achieved

NAMASTE Scheme

(Till 2025)



■ **84,902** Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) have been validated.

■ **54,140** beneficiaries covered under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY

■ **45,871 PPE kits** for SSWs distributed

■ Capital Subsidy of **Rs. 20.36 Crore** released to **707** sanitation workers and their dependents for sanitation related projects.

■ **354** Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) issued

■ **1089 workshops** have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks.

Source: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Recent Developments

Incorporation of Waste Pickers within NAMASTE Scheme

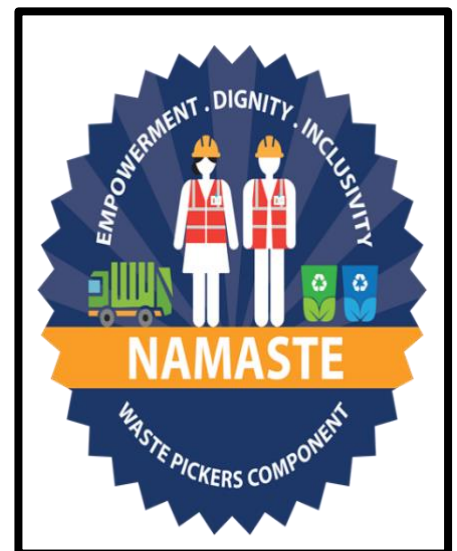
Waste Pickers are vital to India's solid waste management (SWM) ecosystem, significantly contributing to recycling efforts and reducing landfill waste, yet they face challenges like lack of formal recognition, poor working conditions, and limited access to social security. Despite being acknowledged in regulations such as the Second Labour Commission and the SWM Rules, 2016, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) have not fully integrated Waste Pickers into waste collection, segregation, and recycling activities through Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs). The Waste Pickers component of the NAMASTE scheme seeks to address these gaps by formally integrating Waste Pickers into the solid waste value chain, enhancing waste management efficiency, promoting environmental sustainability, and improving their livelihoods. This initiative aims to provide formal recognition, access to financing, appropriate technologies, and a safe, sustainable work environment, while also linking Waste Pickers to social security and welfare schemes to enhance their overall well-being.

The **Waste Pickers component** of the NAMASTE scheme is tailored to tackle the challenges and needs of individuals engaged in collecting, sorting, and managing solid waste. It focuses on supporting **Waste Pickers, Collectors, and Sorters**, who are vital to the solid waste management system but frequently operate in informal and precarious conditions³.

Waste Pickers have been added as target group under the scheme in June 2024. By August 2025, **37,980 waste pickers** have been validated in various Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across the country⁴.

Launch of Waste Picker Enumeration App⁵

On World Environment Day 2025, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (**MoSJE**), in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (**MoHUA**) and the National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (**NSKFDC**), launched the **Waste Picker Enumeration App** in New Delhi, marking a significant expansion of the NAMASTE scheme to include Waste Pickers alongside Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs). This initiative aims to profile **2.5 lakh Waste Pickers**, providing them with **occupational photo ID cards, health insurance** under Ayushman Bharat (PM-JAY), Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, skill development, capital subsidies, and support to strengthen Waste Picker Collectives for managing 750 Dry Waste Collection Centres (DWCCs). By formally recognizing Waste Pickers as vital contributors to India's circular economy, NAMASTE fosters safer working conditions, enhanced access to social protections, and sustainable livelihoods, driving an inclusive and resilient sanitation ecosystem.



³ <https://www.csir.res.in/sites/default/files/2024-08/NAMASTE-Scheme.pdf>

⁴ https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/185/AS28_WrZKXI.pdf?source=pqals

⁵ <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2134303>

Conclusion

The NAMASTE scheme, launched in July 2023, represents a transformative step toward ensuring the safety, dignity, and socio-economic empowerment of sanitation workers and Waste Pickers in India.

Progress made under NAMASTE scheme: 84,902 SSWs and 37,980 Waste Pickers have been validated; 45,871 PPE kits for SSWs & 354 Safety Devices Kit for Emergency Response Sanitation Units have been issued to States/UTs; 54,140 beneficiaries have been covered under Ayushman Bharat –PMJAY and State health scheme; Capital Subsidy of Rs. 20.36 Crore released to 707 sanitation workers and their dependents for sanitation related projects. 1089 workshops have been conducted on Prevention of Hazardous Cleaning of Sewer and Septic Tanks. 568 Responsible Sanitation Authorities (RSAs) and 642 Emergency Response Sanitation Units (ERSUs) have been constituted across the country.

The inclusion of Waste Pickers and the launch of the Waste Picker Enumeration App underscore its commitment to environmental justice and a resilient sanitation ecosystem. Through mechanization, inter-ministerial convergence, and robust awareness campaigns, NAMASTE is not only reducing fatalities and improving working conditions but also fostering sustainable livelihoods, making it a cornerstone of India's efforts to create an inclusive and equitable waste management framework.

Reference Links:

Press Information Bureau:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=1952044>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2145333>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseframePage.aspx?PRID=2012373>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2134303>

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=2158328>

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:

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<https://socialjustice.gov.in/public/ckeditor/upload/57341728039410.pdf>

<https://www.csir.res.in/sites/default/files/2024-08/NAMASTE-Scheme.pdf>