

Action Plan on implementation of Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers for the year 2020-21

1. Background

Manual Scavenging is an occupation that violates the basic human dignity. Successive Central and State Governments/Union Territory Administrations have been trying to bring to an end this occupation with varying success. Despite the adoption of various measures, manual scavenging still exists. The Parliament had enacted “The Employment of Manual Scavengers & Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993”. However, the Act was not effective in achieving its objectives of elimination of insanitary latrines and eradication of manual scavenging. Eradication of dry latrines and manual scavenging, and the rehabilitation of manual scavengers in alternative occupations has been an area of high priority for the Government. Towards this end, a multi-pronged strategy has been followed, consisting of legislative as well as programmatic interventions.

- i. **Legislative Interventions:** Parliament enacted the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (MS Act, 2013) in September, 2013. MS Act, 2013 and has come into effect from 6th December, 2013.
- ii. **Programmatic Interventions:** Subsequent to coming into force of the “Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013” (MS Act, 2013), the Self Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) was revised in November, 2013.

2. Objective:

The objective of SRMS is to provide the following benefits to the identified Manual Scavengers:

- (i) Onetime cash assistance of Rs.40000/- to identified manual scavenger.
- (ii) Loans for project cost upto Rs. 15.00 lacs on concessional rates of interest to the manual scavenger/dependent.
- (iii) Credit linked back-end capital subsidy upto Rs. 3,25,000/-.
- (iv) Skill Development Training upto two years with stipend of Rs.3000/- per month to the manual scavenger/dependent who opts for such training.

The scheme was further revised with the approval SFC from the year 2017-18 by adding the following components:

- (i) Health Camps.
- (ii) Training and Awareness Camps for Sewage/Septic. Workers and distribution of common safety aids.
- (iii) Behavioral Skill Development Training.

3. Approach:

As per the guidelines of the scheme, the scheme is being implemented at the national level through the NSKFDC or other identified agencies for this purpose. At the State level, the implementing agencies will be the state channelising agencies identified for the purpose, which may include government agencies and reputed non-governmental organisations. It is also provided to encourage involvement of reputed micro finance institutions and NGOs for micro financing schemes through the SHGs. For training of the beneficiaries, it is envisaged to involve reputed specialised training institutions, in addition to government institutions.

4. Monitoring of the Scheme

The Guidelines of SRMS prescribes the following monitoring mechanism:-

- I. District level Vigilance Committees to be set up under the ‘Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 would monitor the implementation of the Scheme and hold quarterly meetings with the banks etc. to review the status of the implementation of the Scheme.
- II. For monitoring the progress of implementation of the Scheme, an exclusive interactive website would be launched, on which data would be uploaded at district/State and National level.
- III. Arrangements for online submission of application for loan/subsidy would be made to ensure transparency in the procedure. Further, names of beneficiaries alongwith their details and benefit provided to them would also be displayed on the website.
- IV. The status of the sanction/ disbursement of loan would be intimated to the concerned beneficiaries online or by return email also by the concerned authorities.

5. Progress of Implementation

As per the reports received from States and Union Territories 14,559 manual scavengers have been identified in 13 States upto 13.1.2020. Onetime cash assistance of Rs.40,000/- each has been released to 13,161 identified manual scavengers upto 13.1.2020. In case of the remaining manual scavengers OTCA has not been released due to non receipt of details of bank account and other relevant information. Skill development training has been sanctioned in respect of 8601 identified manual scavengers and their dependents. Capital subsidy has been released to 1074 beneficiaries who have availed bank loans for undertaking self employment projects. In addition, a National

Survey of manual scavengers was carried out in 194 districts of 18 States during 2018-19 and 2019-20 by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The survey in these districts has been completed and 47,775 manual scavengers have been identified till 13.01.2020. Thus a total of 62,334 manual scavengers have been identified since 06.12.2013, the date of coming into force of the MS Act, 2013 upto 13.01.2020.

MS Act, 2013 also has provisions to prohibit hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. Detailed rules framed under the Act provide for the precautions to be taken before, during and after cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and the safety gears, equipments and machines to be used for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

6. Action Plan:

6.1 The following initiatives have been taken by NSKFDC in this regard:-

- With a view to facilitate procurement of cleaning machines and equipments, NSKFDC started the Swachhta Udyami Yojana which provides loans at concessional rate of interest of 4% p.a. The Scheme has been recently revised to provide loans for this purpose directly to municipalities, Jal Boards, Gram Panchayats etc.
- NSKFDC also organizes workshops with the officers, engineers, sanitary inspectors, contractors and sanitary inspectors etc. of the municipalities to sensitise them about safe and healthy cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and the provisions in this regard under the MS Act, 2013 and the rules framed under the Act.
- NSKFDC also conducts a upskilling programme for sanitation workers which includes topics on safe and healthy cleaning practices and behavioural aspects of the sanitation workers.

6.2 The Action Plan for the next financial year 2020-21 is as under:-

S. No.	Component	Coverage					Expenditure (Rs. In Crores)				
		April to June-20	July-Sep. 20	Oct.-Dec.20	Jan. to March-21	Total	April to June-20	July-Sep. 20	Oct.-Dec.20	Jan. to March-21	Total
1	*Onetime cash assistance to the manual scavengers expected to be identified in 24 new proposed districts (@Rs.40,000/-)	2500 (estimated)	2500 (estimated)	-	-	5000	10	10	-	-	20
2	Skill Development Training (@Rs.25000/-)	2000	2500	2500	3000	10000	5.00	6.25	6.25	7.50	25.00
3	Capital Subsidy for Self Employment Projects (@Rs.75000/-)	250	250	250	250	1000	1.875	1.875	1.875	1.875	7.50
4	Health-cum-awareness camps (@Rs.40000/-)	25	25	25	25	100	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.40
5	Workshop on prevention of hazardous cleaning (@Rs.20000/-)	50	50	50	50	200	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.40
6	Behavioural Training (Upskilling programme) (@Rs.8000/-)	500	500	750	750	2500	0.40	0.40	0.60	0.60	2.00
7	Subsidy component of Loans to manual scavengers, sanitation workers involved in hazardous cleaning and their dependents for purchase of small machines for mechanize cleaning of sewers and septic tanks (@Rs. 5 lakh with 50% subsidy)	500	500	500	500	2000	12.50	12.50	12.50	12.50	50.00
8	IEC campaign to create awareness about MS Act, 2013 SRMS and mechanized cleaning	2	2	2	2	8	0.80	0.80	0.80	0.80	3.20
9	Misc. and Administrative Expenses										1.50
Grand Total							30.775	32.025	22.225	23.475	110.00

** The manual scavengers already identified under the National Survey shall be paid onetime cash assistance from the funds released during the year 2019-20.*

6.3 New Initiative:

The existing measures have not succeeded in elimination of hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks and a more serious, stringent and focused strategy framework is required to be put in place. The cleaning of the sewers and septic tanks is linked with developing facilities for transportation, disposal, treatment and utilization of the sullage and is therefore closely linked with the Municipal administration and Gram Panchayat. Accordingly a “National Action Plan” is being formulated in consultation with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and D/o Drinking Water and Sanitation to eliminate manual cleaning of Sewer system & Septic tanks and rehabilitation of workers engaged in manual cleaning. National Action Plan for Mechanized Eco system is a coordinated Action by the above mentioned ministries where in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment will act as the nodal Ministry for implementing the same. It would ensure the role of a coordinating Ministry dealing primarily with monitoring, rehabilitation and skilling of sanitation worker engaged in hazardous cleaning. The above interaction by the M/o SJE involves no additional financial implication on its part. The intervention for promotion of mechanized cleaning would be through the ongoing SUY, a loaning scheme implemented by NSKFDC.

6.3.1 With regard to SRMS, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment would modify the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers to include a component to provide subsidy to the identified manual scavengers, sanitation workers involved in hazardous cleaning and their dependents for purchase small machines for mechanized cleaning of sewers and septic tanks upto a cost of Rs. 5 lakhs where the subsidy component of the loan (maximum Rs.2.5 Lakhs) would be financed through the SRMS budget as was done earlier for the loans to Manual Scavenger. Under the existing scheme, to prevent deaths while cleaning of sewers/septic tanks and also to promote entrepreneurial activity among them to ensure sustainable livelihood and provide dignity of life.

6.3.2 It is also proposed to increase the duration of the programme to an integrated up skilling programme of 15 days to include a component of digital and financial literacy, handling of mechanised equipment, health awareness issues.

Amendment in MS Act, 2013:

The following amendments are proposed in the MS Act, 2013 for its better implementation by December, 2020:

- (i) Section 2 (d) would be amended to include septage treatment plant and such other spaces emitting toxic gases or effluent in the definition of ‘hazardous cleaning’.
- (ii) A new sub-section 4 (1) (a) would be added to facilitate survey of septic tanks by the local authorities to facilitate effective supervision over the maintenance of septic tanks.
- (iii) A new sub-section 4(1) (b) would be added to ensure that the septic tanks are constructed as per the prescribed specification for mechanized cleaning.
- (iv) Section 7 would be amended to include sewage/septage system and any other system emitting toxic gases or effluents.
- (v) Section 9 would be amended to provide more stringent penalties for violation of provisions of Section 7 (prohibits engagement of persons for hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks).
- (vi) Amendment of section 13 to provide payment of compensation to the families of the persons who die while cleaning sewers and septic tanks.
- (vii) Amendment of section 20 for appointment of Responsible Sanitation Authority and inspectors.
- (viii) Amendment of Section 33(1) so as to ensure that the local authority responsible for providing service for mechanised cleaning of sewers/septic tanks.
- (ix) Amendment of Section 33(2) to ensure that State Government provides financial assistance to local authorities required for mechanised cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.

6.3.2 Constitution of Central Monitoring Committees by December, 2020

7. Conditions for Renewal of Scheme:

The term of present (SRMS) scheme is upto 31st March, 2020 to achieve the above objectives and initiatives, the scheme has to be revised and extended upto 31.03.2023 to promote rehabilitation of identified Manual Scavenger and mechanization and elimination of sewer deaths, due to hazardous cleaning.