

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4674
TO BE ANSWERED ON AUGUST 21, 2025**

MECHANISATION OF SEWER CLEANING OPERATIONS

NO. 4674 DR. M P ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI:

Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has mandated mechanised sewer cleaning across all municipal bodies and if so, the details thereof along with the implementation status and other challenges faced, State/UT-wise;**
- (b) whether a recent audit has found that mechanised equipment was provided in only two out of fifty-four fatal cases; and**
- (c) if so, the details of directions, if any, issued to municipal bodies for mandatory mechanisation of sewer cleaning and the steps taken/being taken to eliminate manual sewer entry and expedite full mechanisation?**

ANSWER

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
(SHRI TOKHAN SAHU)**

(a) to (c) : Sanitation is a State subject under 7th schedule of the Constitution and by the 74th amendment of the Constitution of India the devolution of power has been made to the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for water and sanitation services. It is the responsibility of State/ULBs to plan, design, execute and operate sanitation projects in the urban areas of the country. Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) supplements the efforts of States/UTs by providing policy directions, financial and technical support by sharing Manuals/Standard of Procedures (SoPs) on Solid Waste Management (SWM) & Used Water Management (UWM) and issue various Advisories & Guidelines time to time for choosing appropriate technologies to manage solid and liquid waste.

To support Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with treatment of used water, Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 launched on 1st, October, 2021 includes a new component i.e. Used Water management (UWM) with one of the objectives of eradication of hazardous entry into sewers and septic tanks, and sustaining elimination of manual scavenging, through mechanization of sewer and septic tank cleaning operations for which Central share funds for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with population less than 1 lakh are released for (i) procuring septic tank desludging equipments;

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(ii) setting up of Sewage Treatment Plants(STPs)/ STP-cum- Fecal Sludge Treatment plants FSTP; for used water treatment; (iii) laying Interception and Diversion (I&D) structures including provision of pumping stations and pumping main/gravity main upto STP, etc.

Government of India has allocated ₹15926.55 crores under UWM component of SBM-U 2.0 as central share assistance for States/UTs, out of which action plan worth ₹13699.40 crores of central share have been approved so far.

Further, MoHUA has issued an advisory on Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU) to institutionalize safety practices and put in place frameworks to mitigate the dangers of manual cleaning of sewer which may be accessed at https://sbmurban.org/storage/app/media/Advisory_on_Emergency_Response_Sanitation_Unit.pdf

MoHUA has also issued SOP containing procedure to be followed during mechanical and manual cleaning of sewer and empty of septic tanks along with training module for Sanitary workers on Cleaning of Sewers and Septic Tanks which is available at https://sbmurban.org/storage/app/media/SOP_for_Cleaning_of_Sewers_and_Septic_Tanks.pdf

Further, SBM-U, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), has issued Model Empanelment and Contract documents in June, 2025 to guide Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in engaging Private Sanitation Service Operators (PSSOs). This framework aims to establish clear legal and operational guidelines for delivering safe, mechanized services in compliance with the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation (PEMSR) Act, 2013. It further sets the terms for penalties, termination and blacklisting of private operators that violate the safety protocols causing risks to the health and safety of sanitation workers and failing to perform mechanized cleaning services under this contract.

In order to professionalize desludging services, optimise utilisation of STP/FSTP capacities and ensure safe, efficient disposal of faecal sludge, MoHUA is promoting digitalisation of desludging services across all urban areas. Under MoHUA's National Urban Digital Mission, 'Urban Platform for Delivery of Online Governance (UPYOG)' platform offers 'Desludging Service/Faecal Sludge Management' digital module. States/UTs can digitalize the entire desludging process through this module.
