

# Driving safety of sanitation workers in urban India: NAMASTE's vision for dignity and safety of sanitation workers in India

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Global South Academic Conclave on WASH and Climate linkages

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**CWAS** CENTER  
FOR WATER  
AND SANITATION  
**CRDF** CEPT  
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*GATES foundation*



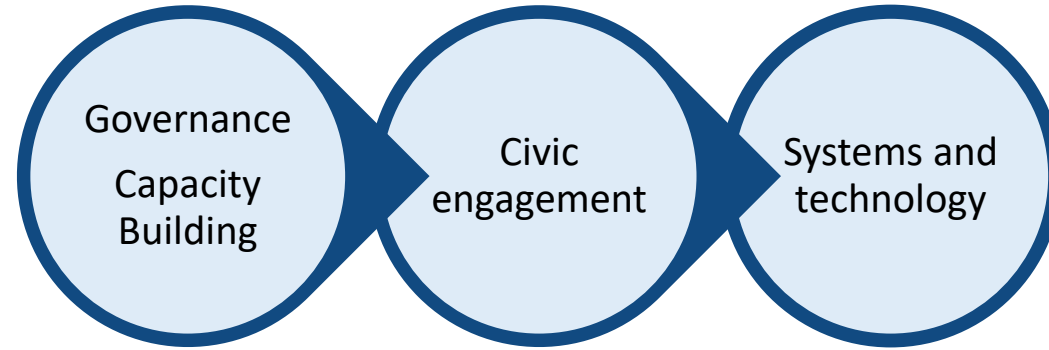


## About Urban Management Centre

- Urban Management Centre is a women led non-profit organization dedicated to building resilient systems for inclusive and equitable development.
- The first organization in India dedicated to professionalizing local government management.
- A multi faceted team of almost 100 professionals including urban planners, architects, urban finance/financial inclusion, community development, social mobilization, skilling experts.
- We are a key member of the NFSSM Alliance

# Core Area

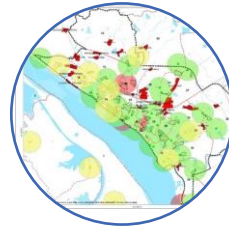
We believe in  
Making cities work for  
everyone



Governance  
Strengthening  
and  
management



Information  
Systems  
Development



Urban Planning



Policy Design  
and  
Implementation



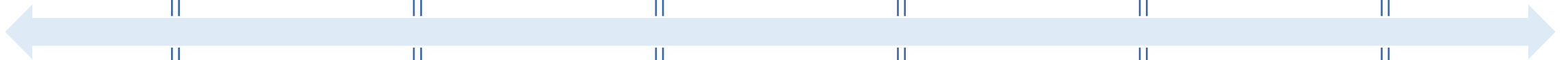
Community  
Engagement and  
Strengthening



Training and  
Capacity  
Building



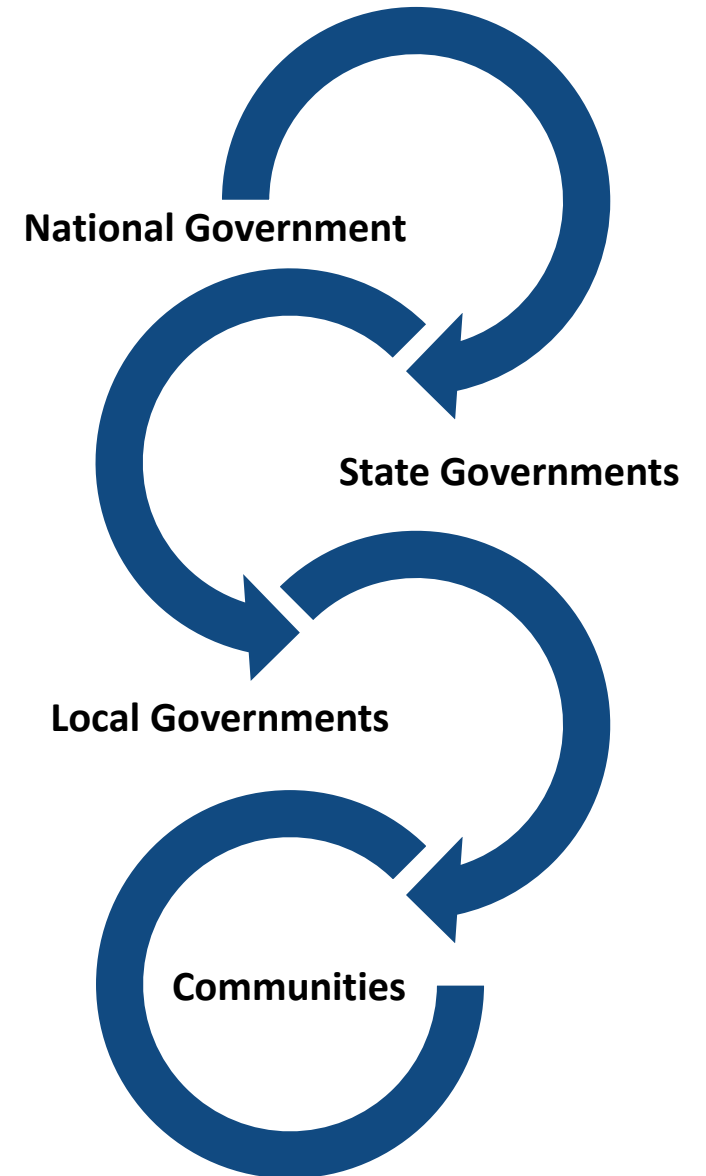
Development  
Communication



# Enabling Change at 4 Levels

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- Supporting the DAY-NULM and Swachh Bharat Mission at Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE), Government of India (GoI)
- TSU to the Housing and Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha and Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department, Tamil Nadu
- Technical Support for capacity building and training of ULB officials and Ward Secretaries in cities of Andhra Pradesh.
- Embedded Teams within urban local bodies in 13 cities.
- Actively supporting Community engagement in more than 300 settlements



# Sanitation and Climate Change

As climate change unfolds, the stability of sanitation practices becomes increasingly crucial

Effective waste disposal and sanitation act as barriers to disease, but with climate changes and more extreme weather events, the **well-being of sanitation workers is directly threatened.**

**Sanitation work is the backbone** of public health, ensuring our communities remain clean and disease-free

Without sanitation workers, **cities can come to a standstill**

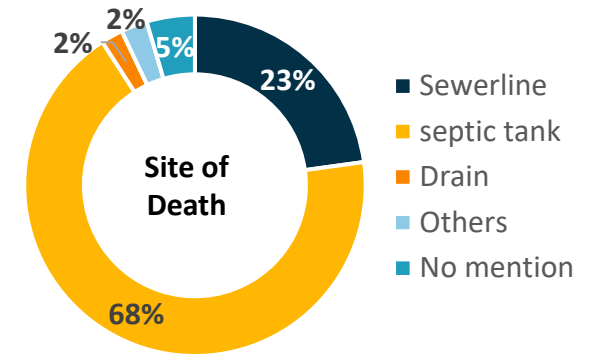
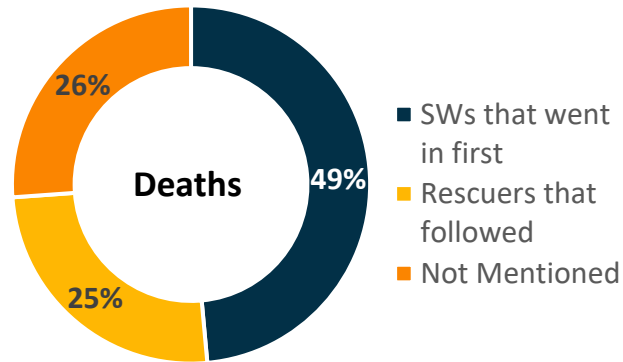
**Thus, Its important to recognize sanitation workers vital role in keeping our world safe and healthy.**



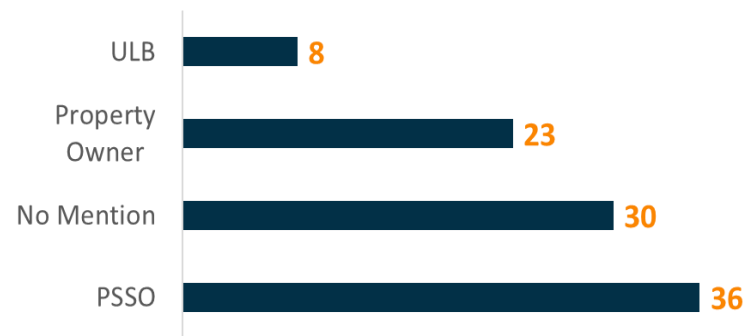
# Deaths of Sanitation Workers in India (2020-2023)

97- Total Incidences  
302- Total Workers Involved

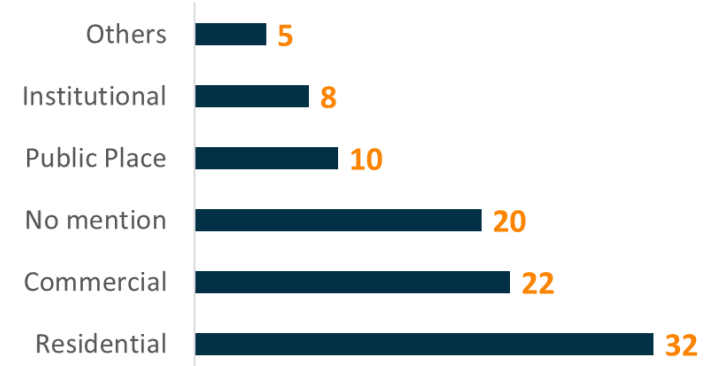
80% Died  
20% Survived



## Employed by



## Place where incidence occurred



## Deaths (age group wise)



\*Analysis based on media reports (as on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023)

# Plight of Sanitation Workers



## Thus there is urgent need to

- Ensure dignity and safe working environment for sanitation workers by providing benefits to sanitation workers through convergence
- Provide opportunities to enhance skills of sanitation workers for working safely

# Addressing the Plight of Sanitation workers

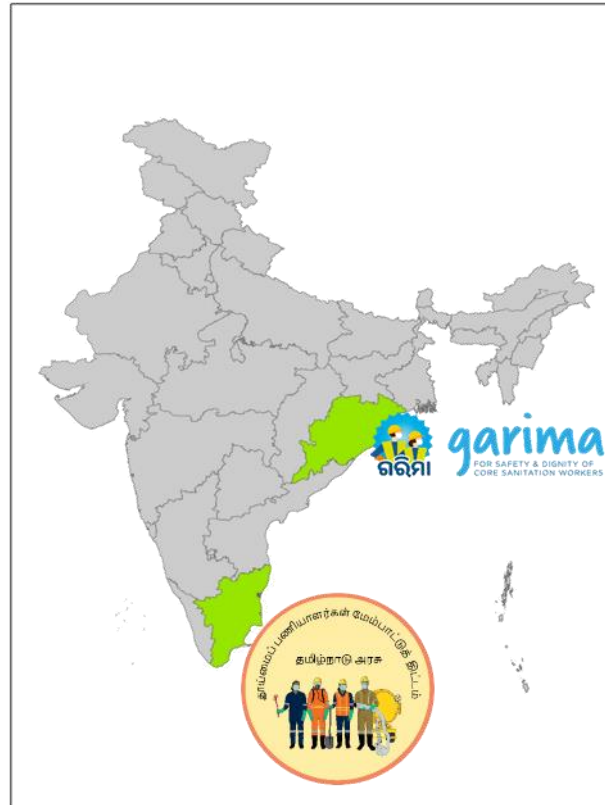
## Odisha (Garima Scheme)

2021- Survey and Validation conducted in **6 pilot cities**  
2022- expanded to cover all **115 ULBs**



## Tamil Nadu (Sanitation Workers Development Scheme)

2023- Survey and Validation conducted in **5 pilot cities**  
2023- scaling-up to cover all **649 ULBs**



## NAMASTE

2023- Survey in **8 pilot cities**  
2023- scaling-up to cover all **4800+ ULBs**





# National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)



A first of its kind convergence between **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** and the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** in 2022 to bring a focused approach to provide occupational, social and financial safety nets

Implementation across **4,800+ Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** ~ **1 lakh SSW** identified

## Components under the Scheme

Profiling of SSWs

Insurance of SSW

Capital Subsidy

Occupational safety training

IEC Campaign

PPE and safety devices

# About NAMASTE

## Aim

1

Ensure occupational safety and dignity of sanitation workers

2

Provide access to entitlements livelihoods support to reduce the vulnerabilities of sanitation workers

3

Behavior change amongst stakeholders to demand safe sanitation services

4

Mechanized cleaning of sewer lines and septic tanks

## Target Group- Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)



Septic Tank/pits Cleaners



Sewer network / maintenance holes Cleaners

## Stakeholders

- MoSJE (NSKFDC) & MoHUA
- Consumers of Sanitation Services
- Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)
- Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)
- Private Sanitation Service Organizations (PSSOs)

# Intended Outcome



**Zero fatalities in sanitation sector**



**No direct contact with human faecal matter**



**Recognition as skilled workers**



**Access to livelihoods**



**SHG and sanitation enterprises formation**



**Increased awareness among citizens**



**Regulation and Enforcement**

# Why Profiling?

The number of manual scavengers identified nationally varies based on different sources.

National Survey of Manual Scavengers (until 2020): **63,246**

Dalberg 2017: More than **20,00,000**

Of the identified Manual Scavengers -

- **68.63%** received cash assistance
- **15.12%** received skill development training
- **1.7%** availed subsidised loans

(Standing Committee On Social Justice And Empowerment, 2020)

**Remaining manual scavengers could not be provided entitlements due to lack of information like bank account details, incomplete addresses etc.**



# Why Profiling?

We have the constitutional mandates, legislations, Supreme Court orders and Human Rights Commission Directives

**Yet, the invisibility of sanitation workers continues...**

**There is a lack of comprehensive data**, hindering the PEMSR Act's focus of: Identifying workers, Linking them with entitlements and Providing alternative livelihood opportunities

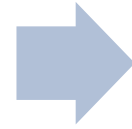
**Inclusion of sanitation workers is not possible if we do not have a robust database of workers.**

**The objective of the profiling is to identify Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and address the challenges in acquiring data**

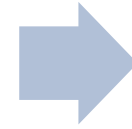


# Why Profiling?

Enumeration of the SSW by enumerators



Validation of the Survey  
By ULB level NAMASTE Nodal  
Officer (100%)



Generating the Unique ID of  
the SSW

*Quality Check of the  
Survey by NSKFDC/PMU*



# Challenges and Measures to Overcome

## Social Challenges

- **Lack of identity** and formal recognition of sanitation workforce
- **Lack of awareness and sensitivity** for sanitation workers safety among citizens
- **Discrimination** in society
- **Lower Literacy levels** and lack of opportunities for skill enhancement

## Measures to Overcome

- IT enabled survey Of SSWs
- Recognition of SSWs through ID cards
- SSWs prioritized for linkage with social security schemes
- Extensive use of IECs for awareness creation
- Linkage With Existing Entitlements



# Challenges and Measures to Overcome

## Economic and Financial Challenges

- Lack of skilling and alternate livelihoods opportunities
- Financial indebtedness

## Measures to Overcome

- Making sanitation work a lucrative source of income
- Recognizing the Workers as Highly Skilled
- Enhanced Minimum Wage
- Risk & Hardship Allowance
- IT enabled regular payment of wages
- Alternate livelihood options
- Disablement Allowance



**HAZARD ASSESSMENT AND PERMISSION REPORT OF RSA FOR CONFINED SPACE ENTRY**

**IMPORTANT:** Human entry into confined space should be avoided if it is reasonably practical to achieve work objective without such entry.

Name of the Duty Supervisor: Rajan Bihari Das

Date of assessment: 02/07/2022 (Date / Month / Year)

Time of assessment: 12:00 AM / PM

Type of confined space: Maintenance hole/ Septic tank

Hazard Assessment Report No.:

NO.	Particulars	Details																
1	Site Name/Location: (Description - road width etc.)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Parameter</td> <td>Specify</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ward Number</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name of locality</td> <td>ISA COLONY</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Name of property/ Street Name</td> <td>NEAR HG-6, (MABAD GTA)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Width of the street in ft</td> <td>22 ft</td> </tr> <tr> <td>By method in case of property, mention width of the street leading to the concerned</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Location of maintenance hole/ sewer line entry point</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Septic tank</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Parameter	Specify	Ward Number	11	Name of locality	ISA COLONY	Name of property/ Street Name	NEAR HG-6, (MABAD GTA)	Width of the street in ft	22 ft	By method in case of property, mention width of the street leading to the concerned		Location of maintenance hole/ sewer line entry point		Septic tank	
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Width of the street in ft	22 ft																	
By method in case of property, mention width of the street leading to the concerned																		
Location of maintenance hole/ sewer line entry point																		
Septic tank																		
2	Description of the issue / problems / complained (Mention the detail of the problems)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Septic Tank is full and overflowing needs</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Declogging</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maintenance hole is nonfunctioning</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cracking in the sewer line</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Regular periodic maintenance of sewer line</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cleaning of septic tank</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Any other ( Describe)</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Septic Tank is full and overflowing needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Declogging	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintenance hole is nonfunctioning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cracking in the sewer line	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regular periodic maintenance of sewer line	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cleaning of septic tank	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ( Describe)			
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Cleaning of septic tank	<input type="checkbox"/>																	
Any other ( Describe)																		

**ANNEXURE -3**

**COMMAND CERTIFICATE**

(Name of the Office) JAWTC Section, JSCVMM

**FOR MECHANISED CLEANING OF SEWER NETWORK**

Sl No	Complain received date	Nature of complain ( Please refer to the specified code as mentioned)	Ward No	Location / Area
1	27-01-22	(B) Block of Sewer Line	07	LC-1507, SSV-1
2	-	-	02	LC-1507, SSV-1
3	-	-	02	LC-1507, SSV-1
4				
5				
6				

**B. Nature of complain**

Code	Nature of complain
A	Overflowing of maintenance hole
B	Cracked sewer lines
C	Regular/periodic cleaning of sewer lines
D	Regular maintenance of sewer lines
E	Fixing/repairing of cover lid or any other aspect in maintenance hole.

Any other ( Please specify)

This is to certify that Sri. Akhaya Kumar Bora (Name of the authorized person) Akhaya (Name of the Private Sanitation Service Organisation (PSSO) is hereby authorized to carry out Cleaning / Maintenance of Sewer Network (WITHOUT HUMAN ENTRY) at the above stated locations on the mentioned date(s).

This certificate ascertains that a site inspection has been done by the Duty Supervisor (the undersigned) and it has been found that all necessary equipment, safety devices needed for conducting the operation mechanically (Without human entry) are available at the site.



# Challenges and Measures to Overcome

## Occupational Challenges

- **Poor contractual mechanisms** and lack of SOPs in local governments
- **Lack of convergence** amongst stakeholders for enforcement
- **Insufficient health and safety measures**
- **Intolerable working environment** leading to substance abuse

## Measures to Overcome

- Strengthening Of Emergency Response Sanitation Unit
- Capacity Building
- Institutionalization Of Training Ecosystem
- Model Contracts
- Garima Griha
- Access To PPE And Safety Devices
- Capacity Building
- Reduced Working Hours



# Impact of the Scheme

➔ **100,000 expected SSWs** and their dependents will be linked to social and financial entitlements like:

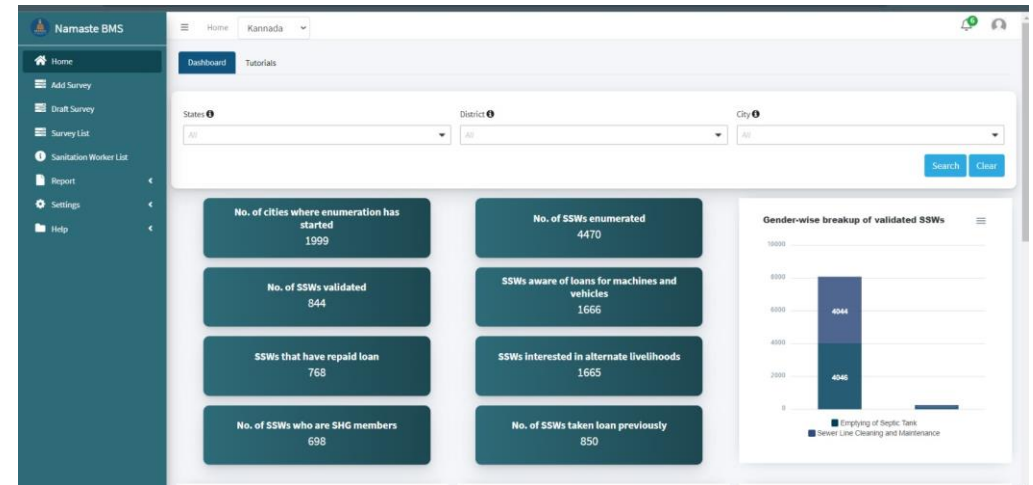
**Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY) scheme** for procurement of sanitation related machines and provide continuous work assurance

**Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana** for Health Insurance

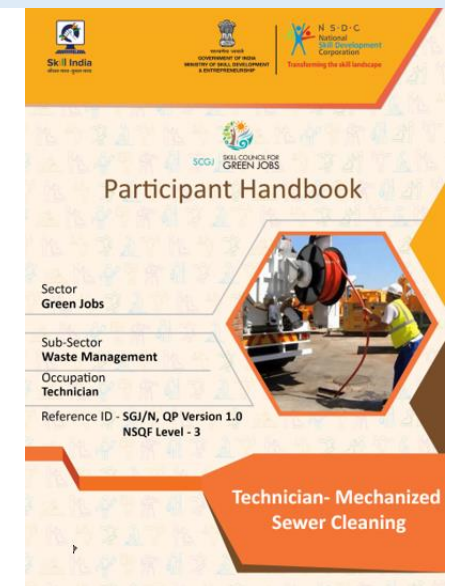
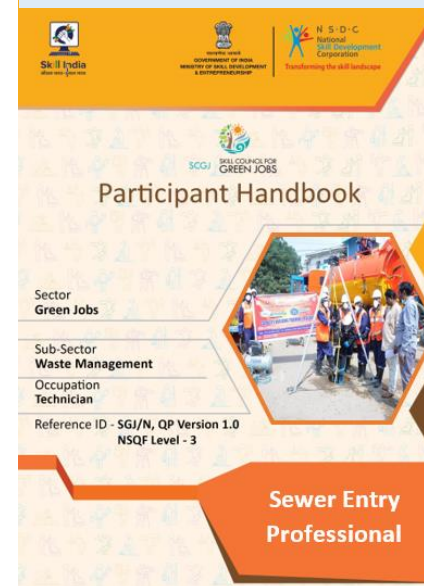
**Access to PPE Kit and safety devices** throughout the year will save them from respiratory and skin diseases and would have a direct effect on their wellbeing.

➔ **Monitoring** the implementation of NAMASTE, tracking targets and recording achievements by the ULBs **through the portal**

➔ **Development of Qualification Packs and National Occupational Standards (QP/NOS)** for SSWs following the Schemes Initiation



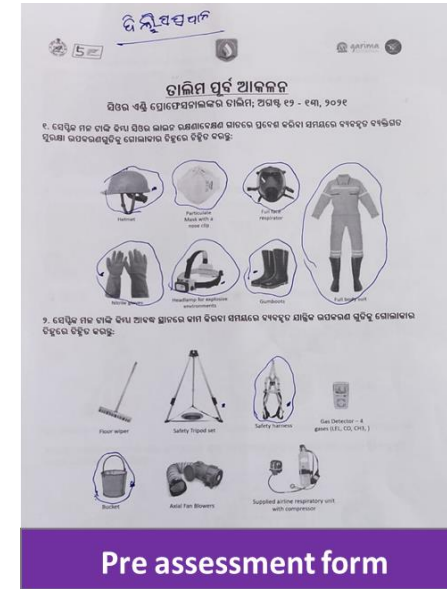
## QP/NOS



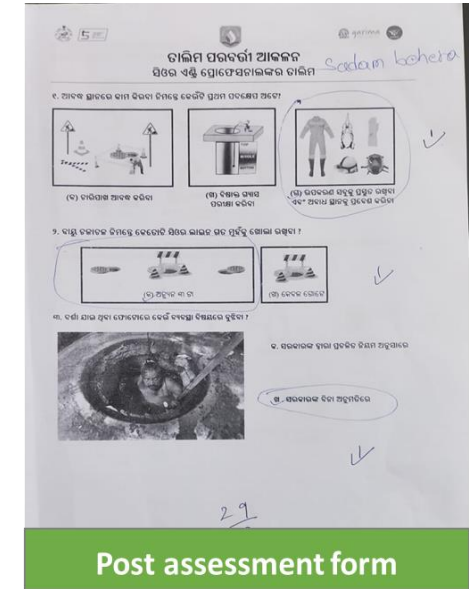
# Impact of the Scheme

## Capacity Building of all SSWs

- Decentralized training- Each state will have training institutes with infrastructure like **simulation septic tank** and **model maintenance hole** to deliver **hands-on practical training**
- Interactive pedagogy
  - Combination of theory and practical training
  - Pre- and post-training assessment
  - Certification



Pre assessment form



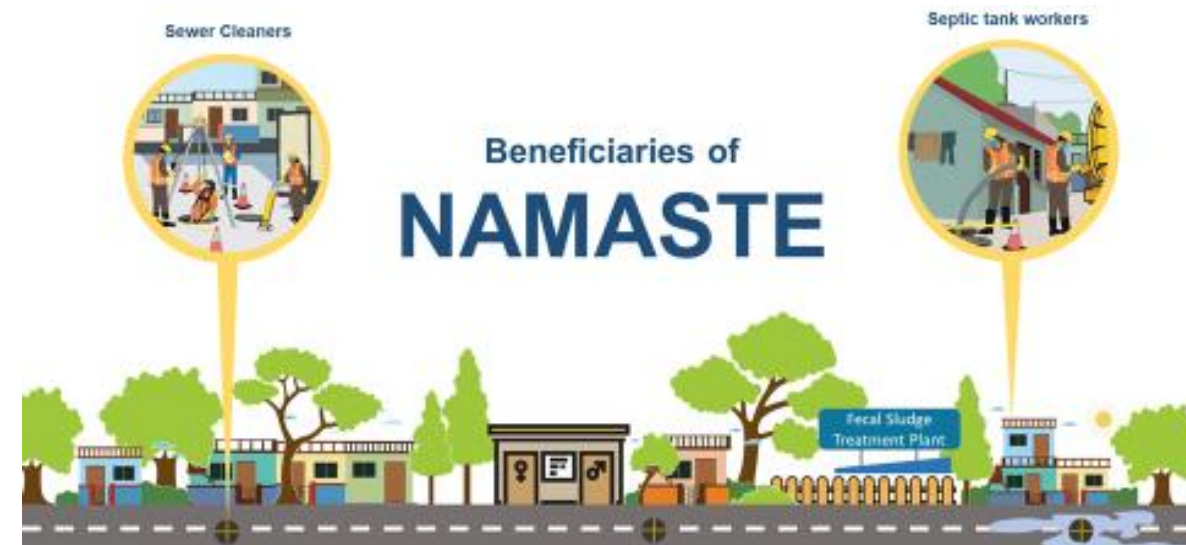
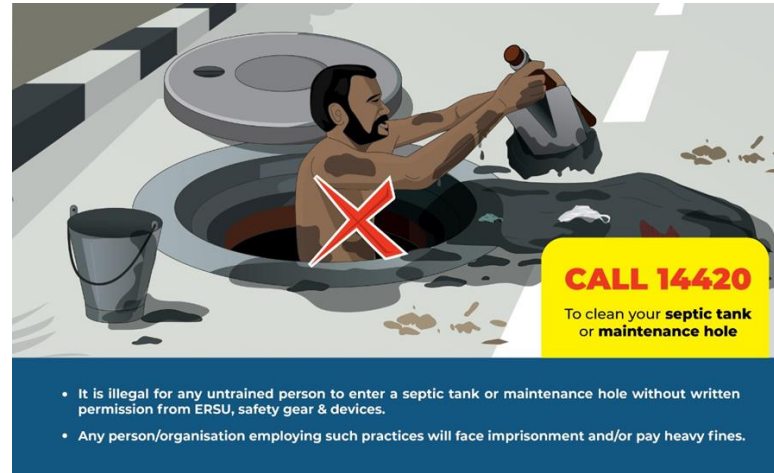
Post assessment form



# Impact of the Scheme

## Capacity Building of Service Seekers

Sensitization of service seekers through IECs to cooperate with sanitation workers and engage them in sanitation work safely



# Application in Global South

- By tailoring the Scheme's principles to local contexts, regions can effectively address shared challenges and ensure the well-being of sanitation workers worldwide.
- The insights from Garima, SWDS, and NAMASTE have been shared globally with South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and African nations (Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda).



# Thank You

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