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for sanitation workers**

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Odisha govt launches social security scheme for sanitation workers

The scheme 'Garima' was launched via video-conferencing by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday and is directed at promoting livelihoods, security and social dignity of sanitation workers through targeted measures to nearly 20,000 sanitation workers and their families. The Odisha government on Friday launched a statewide scheme for sanitation workers, institutionalising and regulating core sanitation services to provide social security and financial benefits to the workers and their families.

The scheme 'Garima' was launched via video-conferencing by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday and is directed at promoting livelihoods, security and social dignity of sanitation workers through targeted measures to nearly 20,000 sanitation workers and their

families. With a dedicated corpus fund of Rs 50 crore, the scheme will be implemented in all the 114 urban local bodies of Odisha, a senior official said.

At the launch the scheme, CM Patnaik said, “Manual scavenging has been the starkest example of discrimination in the name of caste, practised in India, relegating the less privileged to perform sanitation work. In spite of the nation making several strides in various sectors... these underprivileged people were made to render this invaluable service to the society for generations, deprived of safety, dignity and a decent livelihood, apart from suffering social stigma and exclusion.”

He dedicated the scheme to Mahatma Gandhi. Under the scheme, a survey will be undertaken to identify sanitation workers across the state engaged in core sanitation jobs and to register

them under a database on the Swachh Sahar Odisha portal. Registration of private sanitation service organisations (PSSOs) with ULBs for authorisation will also be facilitated, to render sanitation services through certified sanitation workers. “This includes introduction of risk and hardship allowance, priority in educational institutions, provision of health and life insurance, 90 percent grant as housing assistance, 90 percent grant for buying two wheelers, mandatory provision of personal protective equipment and safety devices,” state Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Pratap Jena said.

As stipulated in the scheme, the working hours of sanitation workers will be limited to 6 hours per day, and they, along with their family members, will also be covered under a health insurance scheme and would get periodic health check-ups. The corpus fund will also ensure ex-gratia payment to compensate

sanitation workers in case of partial and permanent disability due to accidents and injury, an official from the Housing and Urban Development Department said. The department has signed an MOU with not-for-profit organisation Urban Management Centre for providing the technical support to implement the scheme.