

1. National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

Why in News?

- Recently, Union Budget 2023-2024 has allocated nearly Rs 100 crore for the National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) and the government is looking to enable 100% mechanical desludging of septic tanks and sewers in all cities and towns.

Highlights

- It was launched in 2022 as a Central Sector Scheme.
- The scheme is being undertaken jointly by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE) and aims to eradicate unsafe sewer and septic tank cleaning practices.
- Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
- All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers.
- No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human faecal matter.
- Sanitation workers are collectivised into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises.
- Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at National, State and Urban Local Body (ULB) levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work.
- Increased awareness among sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers
- NAMASTE envisages identifying the Sewer/Septic Tank Workers (SSWs).
- Occupational Training and distribution of PPE Kits to SSWs.
- Assistance for Safety Devices to Sanitation Response Units (SRUs).
- Extending Health Insurance Scheme Benefits to identified SSWs and their families under the Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).
- **Livelihood Assistance:** The Action Plan will promote mechanization and enterprise development by providing funding support and subsidy (capital +interest) to the sanitation workers, to procure sanitation related equipment's.
- IEC (Information Education and Communication) Campaign: Massive campaigns would be undertaken jointly by the ULBs & NSKFDC (National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation) to spread awareness about the interventions of NAMASTE.