

# **Garima - Ensuring safety and dignity of the sanitation workers**

## Overview of the scheme

Sanitation workers keep our cities and towns clean at the cost of their health, dignity, safety and living conditions. Hailing from oppressed communities they are often at the receiving end of poor-quality education, fewer job opportunities, discrimination, etc. For the first time in the country, the Housing and Urban Development Department of Odisha launched a scheme titled “GARIMA” for the safety and dignity of core sanitation workers directly involved in handling the faecal matter. The scheme is active across all ULBs of the state.

## Scope

Sanitation workers are identified and registered through a state-wide survey under the scheme.

After this, they are provided with the necessary machines and appropriate personal protective equipment to create safe working conditions for themselves and others. The provisions extend to giving them access to higher social security. The Core Sanitation Workers (CSW) are given necessary skill development training which can help them provide better service while staying mindful of their own well-being. Sanitation workers receive counseling and financial support to switch to alternative jobs.





## Key features of the scheme

- Safe working conditions for sanitation workers
- Protection and upliftment of the workers along with ensuring dignity
- Regulating the core sanitation sector
- Better living conditions
- Professionalisation of core sanitation work through intensive training



## Progress so far



All the core sanitation workers (CSWs) across **114** ULBs have been accounted for.



A structure is being chalked out through which CSWs can avail of schemes offered by other departments.



“Garima Griha” set up in Section Offices are a space for storage, washing up and resting for sanitation workers. Currently, **33** such spaces exist where workers are given all basic amenities.



Only those individuals trained at Odisha Water Academy under WAT-CO for entering sewers are allowed to carry out hazardous cleaning. So far **280** such core sanitation workers have received the training and certification.



Sanitation workers also receive “Disability support” and “Illness Allowance”.



The normal working hours of sanitation workers have been cut down to six hours from eight hours.



5,018 CSWs validated against 13,977 during enumeration in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Puri, Rourkela, Berhampur and Sambalpur



Safety has been prioritised with the initiation of Standard Operating Procedures and the setting up of Emergency Response Sanitation Units in all 114 ULBs. WATCO had provided 2000 protective uniforms and 500 full-body wader suits in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri.



Employee’s Compensation Act, 1923 and Employees’ State Insurance Act, 1948 and the Rules/Schemes framed thereunder have been extended to the core sanitation workers.



The Labour and Employees’ State Insurance Department had categorised Core Sanitation Works as Highly Skilled/ Skilled leading to an increase in wages by 49% for Grade-1 & 33% for the Grade-2 category of CSWs.



Equipment necessary for safety adheres to the norms mandated by the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO).



Grade-I category of CSWs receive a Risk & Hardship Allowance of 15% of their daily wage.



Approximately 2500 CSWs have been enrolled under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) in 6 pilot cities.



## Recognition and awards

This programme by WATCO has been recognised by the India Sanitation Coalition (ISC)-FICCI and has been conferred the Special Recognition Award. The National Human Right Commission has recognised “Garima” as the “Best Practice”. Sanitation Workers Forum, Water and Engineering Development Centre and other international forums have appreciated the scheme for its contribution towards the upliftment of sanitation workers.