

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON TRANSFORMING CORE SANITATION WORK

RECOGNIZING SANITATION WORK AS SKILLED LABOUR

27.07.2025



GARIMA

- **Issues surrounding sanitation workers :**

1. Invisibility of workers in the sanitation service eco-system
2. Occupational hazards, due to inadequate design of technology, PPE and safety devices for providing occupational safety.
3. Weak enforcement system due to high informality work
4. Lack of financial safety net, wages, insurance cover, risk and hardship allowances
5. Lack of social safety nets

GARIMA was launched in September 2020 to ensure safety and dignity of core sanitation workers.

Recognition as Skilled and Highly skilled Workers.

- Initially treated as unskilled work treating it as simple operation requiring little or no skill or experience in the job.
- Section 27 of Minimum Wages Act – 1948, empowers state government to add any employment to the schedule in respect of which it is of the opinion that minimum rates of wages should be fixed under this act.
- Accordingly on the proposal of H&UD Department, the Labour and ESI Department has notified the core sanitation workers as Skilled and Highly Skilled workers on 5th July 2021.

SCHEDULE

In Part-I of the Schedule, in the existing employment at Serial Number 43, i.e. "Local Authority", the following categories of employees shall be added:

Category	Name of the work	
	Designation	Nature of work
(1)	(2)	(3)
Highly skilled	Core sanitation worker Grade-I	Core sanitation workers engaged in (1) Desludging of sanitation systems, (2) Maintenance of sewer network, (3) Cleaning of inspection chambers by entering into it and (4) Septic tank cleaning and maintenance.
Skilled	Core sanitation worker Grade-II	Core sanitation workers engaged in operations other than the above, such as (1) Cleaning of drains, (2) Cleaning, operation and maintenance of public and community toilets and (3) Operation and management of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPS) or Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants (FSTPS)

This landmark move resulted in a substantial improvement in wages. Prior to the revision, sanitation workers earned a daily wage of ₹303 as unskilled laborers. With the new classification, minimum daily wages increased to ₹423 for skilled and 483 for highly skilled workers, marking an overall increase of nearly 50% in wages in 2021. Today the Highly Skilled wage rate is ₹612 and the Skilled wage rate is ₹562 as per minimum wages act.

Other Humane Interventions :

- Reduced the working hours of Core Sanitation work to 6 hours per day by notification dated 7th May 2022.
- Provided a monthly Risk & Hardship allowance amounting to 15% of the minimum wages over and above the entitled daily wages by notification dated 13th August 2021.

- THANK YOU