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Title: Need to provide protection to the sewage workers working in man-made holes in the Country.

SHRI S.K. KHARVENTHAN (PALANI): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, like other sectors in post-liberalization India, sewer cleaning, construction and maintenance of Sewage Treatment Plants and sanitation work are being privatized in many cities and towns throughout the country. The contractors fail to provide even minimum wages and they are not following safety norms also. Manhole workers are wearing nothing more than a loincloth or half pants. Across the country, nearly 1,000 manhole workers are dying every year while on duty due to release of hazardous gases like Hydrogen Sulphide known as Sewer Gas, Carbon dioxide and Carbon Monoxide from the manhole. In developed countries, the manhole workers are provided with bunny suits to protect them from contact with contaminated water and sport a respiratory apparatus, the sewers are well lit, mechanically aerated with huge fans and, therefore, there is no oxygen deficiency in manholes.

Therefore, I urge upon the Government to find out a human friendly system to manage the garbage and sewage to protect the poor Dalits working in manholes throughout the country through the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission Scheme which has allocated 40 per cent of its money for drainage and sewage work, out of Rs. 1,20,536 crore.