Danger in the Sewer

One issue. 4 GS papers. 3 dimensions. 1 workplace safety test.

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CURRENT AFFAIRS → MULTIDIMENSIONAL THINKING

⚡THE ISSUE IN 30 SECONDS

FACT	WHY IT MATTERS
859 sewer and septic deaths, 2014 to 2025	Parliament and NCSK data show 1,350 between 1993 and 2025
Manual scavenging declared eliminated	It says this for insanitary latrines, but sewer deaths continue
Compensation is ₹30 lakh per death	The Supreme Court set it in Dr. Balram Singh (2023)
NAMASTE shows an aim-outcome gap	The editorial says kits cannot replace removing risky situations

CORE IDEA: Sewer deaths persist despite law, court orders and technology, so the policy test is to eliminate situations that need human entry, through mechanisation, contractor enforcement, formal employment and social security, rather than relying only on compensation and equipment.

🌍THINK BEYOND

Law and court orders exist → **Hazardous entry continues** → **Liability is often evaded** → **Deaths may be under-reported** →
Prevention by design is needed → **Mechanisation and formal jobs protect lives**

How can policy remove the need for human entry, not only protect those who enter?

🧩UPSC CONNECT

🌍 GS1 · SOCIETY
Caste, occupation and social inequality
Use in: Caste • Occupation

🏛 GS2 · GOVERNANCE
Welfare law, Supreme Court orders and local bodies
Use in: Law • Local bodies

⚡ GS3 · TECH
Mechanisation, safety technology and urban infrastructure
Use in: Mechanisation • Safety

⚖ GS4 · ETHICS
Human dignity, accountability and duty of care
Use in: Dignity • Accountability

🎯OPTIONAL CONNECT

PUB ADMIN	LAW	SOCIOLOGY	ECONOMICS
Contract oversight and **accountability**	Manual scavenging **law** and orders	Caste, **occupation** and dignity	Informal labour and **social security**

✏HOW CAN I USE THIS IN MAINS?

ESSAY *"Dignity of labour means removing the risk, not paying for it."*
GS3 *Use this to discuss mechanisation, safety technology and urban sanitation.*
GS2 *Use it to discuss manual scavenging law, court orders and municipal accountability.*
GS4 *Use it to discuss human dignity, accountability and duty of care.*

👤THINK LIKE AN OFFICER

★ KEY SECTION

CASE: You are a Municipal Commissioner. Sewer cleaning is outsourced, and contractors still send workers into sewers without safety checks, and you must prevent deaths in your city.

YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS: WHAT DO YOU DO?

☐ Rely on contractors' assurances ☐ Distribute kits and stop there
☐ Mechanise cleaning and enforce contracts ☐ Pay compensation after deaths

MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACH

1 · MECHANISE FIRST
Use machines and bar entry without clearance

2 · ENFORCE CONTRACTS
Audit contractors and penalise violations

3 · FORMALISE WORKERS
Register workers with wages and social security

4 · REPORT EVERY CASE
Track incidents and publish data openly

🔑3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

01 · CONNECT
Remove risk, not just insure it

02 · THINK
Enforcement protects lives

03 · APPLY
Apply this across GS1-4, Essay and optionals