



## SMILE-75 Initiative

**For Prelims:** SMILE Scheme, Central Sector Schemes, National Institute of Social Defence, National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation

**For Mains:** SMILE Scheme for beggars and its significance in enhancing their livelihood, Decriminalization of begging, status of beggars in India

### Why in News?

The Government of India has formulated a comprehensive scheme of **SMILE (Support for Marginalised Individuals for Livelihood and Enterprise)** to address the persisting problem of destitution and beggary.

- Under the “SMILE-75” Initiative, 75 **Municipal Corporations** will undertake **comprehensive rehabilitation** of persons engaged in the act of begging in the spirit of **Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav**.

### What do we need to know about the SMILE 75-Initiative?

- Aim:**
  - Municipal Corporations, in collaboration with **NGOs** and other stakeholders will cover several comprehensive welfare measures for **persons who are engaged in the act of begging**, with focus extensively on **rehabilitation**, provision of **medical facilities, counselling, awareness, education, skill development, economic linkages and convergence with other Government welfare programmes etc.**
    - The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has also **allocated a total budget of Rs.100 crore** for the SMILE project for **coming years till 2025-26**.
  - It seeks to develop a **support mechanism** for holistic rehabilitation of those engaged in the act of begging.
- Implementing Ministry:**
  - The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- Components:**
  - It includes the sub-scheme of:**
    - Comprehensive Rehabilitation of **persons engaged in the act of Begging**
- Objectives:**
  - To make cities/town and municipal areas **begging-free**.
  - To make a **strategy for comprehensive rehabilitation** of the persons engaged in the act of begging through the coordinated action of various stakeholders.

### What is the status of Beggars in India?

- According to the **Census 2011**, the total number of beggars in India is **4,13,670** (including **2,21,673 males** and **1,91,997 females**) and the **number has increased from the last census**.

- **West Bengal** tops the chart followed by **Uttar Pradesh and Bihar** at number two and three respectively. Lakshadweep merely has **two vagrants according to the 2011 census**.
- Among the union territories, **New Delhi had the largest number of beggars** 2,187 followed by 121 in **Chandigarh**.
- Among the northeastern states, **Assam topped the chart** with 22,116 beggars, while **Mizoram ranked low** with 53 beggars.

**[Source: PIB](#)**

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/smile-75-initiative>

