

Violence against Manual Scavengers: Dalit Women in India



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Submitted by:



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1. Manual Scavenging: A Practice of Caste Based Violence against Dalit Women:

“The manual removal of human and animal excreta using brooms, small tin plates, and baskets carried on the head. The allocation of labour on the basis of caste is one of the fundamental tenets of the Hindu caste system. Within this system dalits have been assigned tasks and occupations which are deemed ritually polluting by other caste communities - such as sweeping, disposal of dead animals and leatherwork. By reason of their birth, dalits are considered to be "polluted", and the removal of human and animal waste by members of the "sweeper" community is allocated to them and strictly enforced...”

United Nations Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, 27th Session, Geneva, 27-31 May 2002

Even after 62 years of independence which saw India establishing democratic institutions, taking great strides in economic development and aspiring to be a global power, the country still struggles in the clutches of the caste system which has denied generations of Dalits, considered in the lowest rungs of the caste system and hence polluting, their rights and human dignity.

The practice of manual scavenging is prevalent in India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari; from backward states to developed states and likewise. Even after making a law to abolish it in 1993, The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, it is not being implemented with the commitment required as on date. In the past 18 years, many political parties have come into power but none of them tried to put an end to this practice of formulate concrete strategies for implementation of the Act. The governments till now have apparently shown complete lack of political will on this issue with different Governments extending the time limit (for complete eradication of manual scavenging) 8 times, but this practice continues!

It is amply clear that manual scavenging is one of the prominent forms of discrimination and atrocities that has been taking place with Dalits since ages and which is central to violation of their human rights. 95% of those engaged in this practice includes women. In India largely two communities continue this inhuman practice – the ‘Valmikis’ (Hindus) and the ‘Haila’ (Muslims). While the Hailas come under the OBC category the Valmikis belong to the scheduled caste and the both are placed in the lowest rung of the Indian society, and therefore – untouchable within the untouchables.

Forms of Discrimination

The people from these communities are made to live in locations that are isolated from the rest of the village community. In practice the hierarchy of the society is made visible by the pattern of habitation of the people in the villages, town or cities. It begins with the upper castes

occupying the decent locations followed by lower castes and then manual scavengers who are considered untouchables even within their own community.

The extreme form of exploitation inherent in the caste system has made a mockery of modern India's labour laws and international conventions on the rights of the workers. Manual scavengers, for example, are paid a pittance. An average manual scavenger earns around Rs.5 to Rs.15 per household per month.

Health is another issue of prime concern. Manual contact with excreta exposes manual scavengers to various diseases; infection of skin, rotting of fingers & limbs, tuberculosis and nausea are common. Several complain inability to have food due to exposure to excreta. Most women from the manual scavenging communities tend to be addicted to tobacco (Gutka) and men are given to liquor in an attempt to diminish the repulsive nature of their work and beat back their state of hopelessness.

The children of the manual scavenging communities are usually treated with contempt by their teachers and fellow classmates. Denial of dignity generates fear among children, leading to very high drop-out rates.

Manual scavenging is one of the most inhuman and degrading forms of work performed by Dalit women. It is the manual removal of human and animal excreta using brooms, small tin plates and baskets carried on the head or hips. Refusal to perform such tasks leads to physical abuse and social boycott. The perception of dalits as polluting persons by reason of their birth causes them to be separated from the rest of caste society and excluded from social, religious and economic life. Public latrines are cleaned on a daily basis by female workers using broom and a tin plate¹. The practice of manual scavenging involves manual cleaning of dry toilets, which are no more than a small room in which a hole in the ground opens into a receptacle in a compartment below. Manual scavengers have actually to crawl into the compartment and empty out the receptacle. The excrement is piled into baskets, which are carried on the head or on the waist to a location that is far away from the latrine. At all times, and especially during the rainy season, the contents of the basket drip onto a scavenger's hair, face, clothes and other body parts.

The harassment of these women is also rampant in the form of sexual exploitation when they go to clean up the toilets since they are often teased by the menfolk.

Manual Scavengers belong to the lower most rung in the society and are looked down upon even by the larger society of the dalits who themselves are subjected to untouchability by the upper castes.

¹ *Paper on Manual Scavenging by working group on contemporary forms of slavery, Sub-commission on the promotion and protection of Human Rights, United Nations Commission on Human Rights (Geneva, 27 – 31 May 2002)*

Status of Women and Girl Child: The status of the women is the worst. They become vulnerable for being women, for being a Dalit, and for being a manual scavenger. Surveys have revealed that **95 – 98% of the manual scavengers in the country are women.** They bear the dual burden of taking care of their families as well as working as manual scavengers. They are subjugated, oppressed, marginalized and victimized in both social and household spheres of life. The girl child faces discrimination at all levels and is usually compelled to take up the occupation once married.

2. Violation of laws:

As is amply evident, millions of people – majority of them women - across the country continue to be held captive by the inhuman and degrading tradition of manual scavenging. It is because of this caste-based tradition that they remain deprived of their constitutional and statutory rights to equality, liberty, education and social development. Manual scavenging is virtually a form of modern-day slavery that violates the following.

1. The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
2. Bonded Labor System (abolition) Act, 1976.
3. Section 7(a) of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, which deems anyone forcing another person to engage in bonded labor, manual scavenging or disposing animal carcasses to be committing a criminal offense punishable with 3 to 6 months of imprisonment and fine up to Rs 500.
4. The practice of manual scavenging violates articles 14, 17, 21 and 23 of the Constitution.
5. Vishakha guidelines and Protection of Women from Sexual harassment at workplace.
6. Various provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and CEDAW which hold all human beings to be equal and to which India is a signatory.

3. Issues related to Manual Scavenging:

Census of India 2011:

According to the Census of India 2011, there are still 794,390 dry latrines in the country, where the human excreta is cleaned up by humans. 73% of the dry latrines are in rural areas where as 27% in urban areas. Apart from these there are 1,314,652 toilets where the human excreta is flushed in open drains. According to the definitions by Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan and the Drafting Committee for the amendment in 1993 act, the human excreta flushed in open drains through toilets like these are also cleaned up by human beings. The census also adds that there are 497,236 toilets in the country where the human excreta is cleaned up by animals through eating it. This is however a very confusing statement as we believe that in toilets like these it is not possible that the human excreta is cleaned up completely through animals eating it. Ultimately it has to be cleaned up by humans only. Thus there are more than 26 lakhs [2.6 million] dry latrines in the country where the practice of manual scavenging still continues. The

Census says that in states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi NCR, Rajasthan and Jharkhand there are very less no. of dry latrines exist. However this is far from being true as surveys conducted by Garima Abhiyan and other organisations it has clearly come out that even in these states dry latrines exist and the practice of manual scavenging continues at a large scale in these states. It is a matter of surprise that in states where the practice of manual scavenging is clearly visible the Census reports negligible numbers of dry latrines.

Manual scavenging in Indian railway:

Indian Railways is an institution in the country where dry latrines exist in great numbers and a large number of individuals are engaged in manual scavenging. Recently Rural Development, Water and Sanitation Minister have also called the Indian railway the world's biggest open toilet. He accepted we are the world's capital for open defecation. 60 per cent of all open defecation in the world is in India. This is a matter of great shame. An Indian railway is really the largest open toilet in the world. 11 million passengers every day and we all know the state of sanitation in our railway. At present only nine trains with 436 coaches are fitted with bio-toilets, while 4,000 coaches are produced annually which could be fitted with new bio-toilets developed by Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

Uncompleted and unsuccessful rehabilitation of manual scavengers in India²:

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India initiated the Self Employment scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) in 2007. An amount of Rs.735.60 Crores was allocated for the rehabilitation of 3,42,468 individuals. This scheme was for the period January 2007 to March 2009 but was extended till March 2010. Under this scheme only 1,18,474 individuals showed interest to avail the benefits out of which 78,941 individuals were benefited and 39,533 individuals could not due to various reasons. According to the Ministry a total of Rs.231 Crores were released under this schemes between financial years 2006-2007 to financial year 2009-2010. Under this scheme 13275 individuals were benefited. Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan conducted a survey on Implementation status of SRMS in 3 states of India in year 2010-11. Some findings of this study are given below:

- a) 76 % people who got benefits, were not involved in the manual scavenging practice.
- b) Scheme was not launched in the 25% of districts and said that manual scavenging practice does not exist in these districts. But during the study, it was found that manual scavenging practice is rampant in these districts.
- c) 98 per cent of people engaged in the profession are women. But it was found that benefits of SRMS were given to 51 per cent of men in these three states.
- d) 85% people said that they have faced various types of problems to get benefits of scheme like time wasting, bribe, misbehaviour and problems related to the documents and processes.

² Study on rehabilitation of manual scavengers (implementation status of SRMS scheme) in India by Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan www.dalits.nl/pdf/120328.pdf

- e) Middle men or commission agents would visit Dalit bastis telling households to sign on so and so papers as the government had chosen them as beneficiaries of a new scheme. The beneficiaries would never get to know the loan amount, sanctioning officer or other details of the transactions. After a while, the middle men would revisit them and hand over Rs 3,000 to Rs 4,500. Many of these people did not even know why they were being given the money or how much money had been borrowed in their names. In Madhya Pradesh, around 68 per cent of the beneficiaries were taken for a ride by the brokers, in Uttar Pradesh, 63 per cent and in Rajasthan 62 per cent.

There were many fallacies and gaps in this scheme due to which people did not avail the benefits inspite of the provisions and as a result the scheme could not be effective. Some of the identified gaps in the schemes are as follows:

1. Issue of women: Most of the provisions for rehabilitation under the scheme were not gender sensitive and were addressing men largely. Our experience says that around 95-98% of the individuals involved in manual scavenging are women. The exploitation of these women on grounds of patriarchy and caste system is very high!
2. Issue of loan: The biggest flaw in this Scheme was that though it was for the rehabilitation of those involved in manual scavenging the key provision was for a loan with some amount of subsidy. According to us; To take a community, which was compelled to take up manual scavenging due to a caste based system and was excluded, socially, politically and economically, out of this system loan cannot be a solution, even if it comes with some amount of subsidy. The key assumption of this scheme was based on loans therefore it could not become successful in addressing its objectives.]
3. Defaulters: Most of the loans under SRMS are through banks and it has been observed that most of these loan sizes are around Rs.25000 out of which 50% or Rs.12500 is the subsidy component. Most of the subsidy amount is spent on taking the loan due to the red tape and the loan amount (apart from the subsidy) is interest chargeable by the bank. Individuals who are not able to pay back this amount therefore become 'Defaulters'.
4. Rural Areas: According to our survey around 60% of those involved in manual scavenging are in rural areas (larger villages and settlements). The focus of the survey and the benefits of the scheme was however skewed more towards urban areas therefore limiting the benefits to those in the urban areas and leaving out the others on a large scale.
5. Corruption: There was large scale corruption involved in preparing the list for rehabilitation by the states. If we talk about Madhya Pradesh alone we found that in districts where more than 165 women are involved in manual scavenging not a single name was included in the list and in districts having 302 such women 2186 names were included. Our surveys say that only 10% of those involved in manual scavenging were actually included in the list and the rest were left out. This has resulted in many eligible individuals not getting the benefits and at the same time many who were not eligible benefiting out of the scheme.

6. In many areas it was found that rampant corruption had taken place with respect to the scheme. Almost all or most of the subsidy portion of the loan has gone into corruption and there was lack of any monitoring system. Issues related to corruption have surfaced openly in many of the states.

1993 act and new proposed bill:

- A. The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act:** The practice of manual scavenging is continuing in India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from backward states to developed states. Even after making a law to abolish it in 1993 through “The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act”. It is not being implemented even today. Government extending the time limit many times. But this practice has been continuing. That act was totally failed. Entry of 1993 act was sanitation and this act was passed under article 249 of the constitution. Parliament has been passed that act under this provision after passing any two state assemblies but this is depend on the states that they implement or they do not implement even after passed by the parliament. Due to this many state governments has not passed this act in their state assemblies even after 2 decade of 1993 act. Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation was responsible to implement of this act. There were no concrete provisions under that act towards the rehabilitation and total eradication of manual scavenging practice in many areas like railways, open defecation etc. There were some other problems in that act due to that this act could not be implemented effectively in all states.
- B. The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012 tabled in parliament (LokSabha):** A bill that seeks to prohibit manual scavenging, rehabilitate those engaged in such inhuman employment and impose stringent measures to stop such practices was introduced in the Indian Parliament (LokSabha) on 3rd September 2012. Drawing from the Indian constitution that assures dignity of the individual, the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012, recommends eliminating the engagement of people to carry out hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks. This bill introduce by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Minister. We are very happy to the Ministry introduce this new legislation. Many parts of the proposed bill are very important like the definition of manual scavengers; they covered manually cleaning, carrying, disposing or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit, etc. competitive 1993 act this definition is very comprehensive. Under the proposed bill announce some important provisions regarding to identification, monitoring, vigilance, rehabilitation and penalties. Many critics also there in the proposed bill regarding to liberation, rehabilitation and direct coverage of employers like Indian Railways. There are still insufficiencies in the proposed bill regarding rehabilitation of manual scavengers and also process of adoption of the bill is very slow. So, we are

struggling for improvements to the bill and speedy process for adoption of new legislation.

Self-contradiction and non implementation of scholarship scheme for manual scavengers³:

An example of a particularly self-defeating government programme is a scholarship for the children of the manual scavengers, (Scholarship for the Children of Families involved in incline occupation) which require the families seeking the benefit to have been engaged in manual scavenging for at least 100 days in a year. This scholarship scheme provides a perverse incentive to the Dalit households to continue in this occupation. Recently government had done some policy level changes. But, these changes are not implementing by the many state governments.

Caste aspect:

Government programmes have emphasized the financial aspect of rehabilitation and failed to address the caste-based oppression and related social conditions that have perpetuated this practice for centuries.

The Issue of Dalit Muslims:

Many Dalit Muslims are also involved in manual scavenging in many areas and their situation is also critical. Like other Dalits they also face untouchability and discrimination and not being included in the Scheduled Castes they are also deprived of the legislations like SC, ST prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and other schemes of the government for Scheduled Castes. Due to the lack of understanding of the local administration that even Muslims are involved in manual scavenging they are even deprived of the benefits of schemes like SRMS. We want to recommend that the Government of India forms a special package for the Dalit Muslim families involved and liberated from the practice of manual scavenging which should include issues like rehabilitation, education, housing and other similar issues of concern.

4. Recent Maila Mukti Yatra 2012-13

To total eradication of manual scavenging in India, a 65 day *Mail Mukti Yatra* was organized in 200 districts of 18 states India. More than 5000 women freed from this evil participated in this *Yatra*. They went to colonies and houses of women engaged in this practice and motivated them to get free from this practice instantly. They explained that though they may be deprived of few stale *chapattis*, few old clothes, some money, though they may be pressurized or boycotted but they should not continue do this work. "We won't do this and will live with dignity" was the motto. We won't take human excreta on our head and will live a life of dignity.

After such discussion, most of the women would decide to leave this practice. At some places, if their family members won't agree, than they were convinced through songs and bhajans. Once decided, the pots were burnt at a public place in village and it was announced that manual scavenging has been abolished in the village from that day and if someone pressurizes

³ National Public Hearing on Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers and their Children in India organized by Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan – Jan Sahas <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article3261450.ece>

to freed people to do this, action would be taken against them. *Kacche* (Dry) Toilets were broken at some places whereas at some places the untouchability was finished during the Yatra itself. Admission for community members was ensured at water sources, tea shop, barber shop etc. At some places, people from non dalit communities opposed as well. In villages where dalits were not allowed to wear chappels in non dalit colonies and weren't allowed to take marriage processions, rallies were organized with drum beats and these were headed by women who used to practice manual scavenging till date. After the whole process, the freed women were felicitated at a public place in village, were given sweets and a memento.

This 10,000 km long Yatra was launched to from Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and covered 200 districts of 18 states culminating in New Delhi. **During this march 3000 more women gave up manual scavenging.** State and national level, as well as international actors, such as several governments and UN bodies, were aware of and supported the Yatra. For example, the European Parliament referred to the Yatra in their resolution on Caste Discrimination in India last

year
(<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=%2F%2FEP%2F%2FNONGML+MOTION+P7-RC-2012-0574+0+DOC+PDF+V0%2F%2FEN>).

4. UN High Commissioner applauds Indian movement to eradicate 'manual scavenging'

On 31st January, the **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay**, in her statement said that “. Manual scavenging is a clear manifestation of discrimination based on Caste and Gender”(<http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=12959&LangID=E>).

GENEVA (31 January 2013) - The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay on Thursday welcomed the strong movement that has been developing over the past few months in India to eradicate the practice known as 'manual scavenging' which, because of the stigma attached to it, has traditionally been carried out by Dalit women in a clear manifestation of discrimination based on caste and gender.

The focus on manual scavenging – essentially the manual removal of human excreta from dry latrines and sewers – has recently been significantly heightened in India by a National March for the Eradication of Manual Scavenging (also known as “Maila Mukti Yatra”). The March, which in addition to advocating the eradication of manual scavenging has called for the comprehensive rehabilitation of those who have been conducting it, took place over a period of 63 days, starting on 30 November 2012 and crossed a total of 200 districts in 18 states. It will be formally concluded on Thursday in New Delhi.

“I congratulate the strenuous efforts and commitment of the organizers, and of all the participants -- especially the thousands of liberated manual scavenger women -- who marched across the country in support of the many others who are still being forced to carry out this dreadful practice,” the High Commissioner said.

“An estimated 90 percent of manual scavengers are Dalit women who face multiple inequalities and discrimination based on their caste and gender, and who are often exposed to violence and exploitation,” she added.

“Because of the nature of the work, manual scavenging has contributed to a self-perpetuating cycle of stigma and untouchability,” Pillay said. “Manual scavenging is not a career chosen voluntarily by workers, but is instead a deeply unhealthy, unsavoury and undignified job forced upon these people because of the stigma attached to their caste. The nature of the work itself then reinforces that stigma.”

The High Commissioner met two years ago in Geneva some of those campaigning against manual scavenging “I was deeply moved when they presented me with a brick they had broken off a dry latrine,” she said. “I keep it by my office to this day as a reminder of their struggle.” “I am encouraged to hear that the march has been supported by a wide cross-section of society, who have come together to energize the growing movement to abolish this degrading form of work, which should have no place in 21st century India,” Pillay said.

In September 2012, a new bill on The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation was submitted to the Indian Parliament by the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment. The bill builds on the strong legislative framework already in place prohibiting untouchability and bonded labour, and adds a comprehensive definition of manual scavenging. “The new bill provides a solid framework for the prohibition of manual scavenging,” Pillay said. “India already has strong legal prohibitions on caste discrimination, so the key to the new law will be effective accountability and enforcement. It is also crucial that adequate resources are provided to enable the comprehensive rehabilitation of liberated manual scavengers. This is the only way these grossly exploited people will be able to successfully reintegrate into a healthier and much more dignified work environment, and finally have a real opportunity to improve the quality of their own lives and those of their children and subsequent generations.”

5. Recommendations

Recommendations regarding to The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012

It is now proved that “The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Dry latrines construction (Prohibition) Act 1993” has failed to eradicate inhuman practice of manual scavenging from the country. Keeping this fact in mind the Government of India proposed new bill “The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012”. Government of India should immediately pass new effective law and added these points in the new law:

- A. A viable and formidable rehabilitation scheme should be developed under the proposed Act which must have provision for social and economic rehabilitation of families liberated from scavenging since 1993 and later, and those who will be liberated in future as well. The scheme should have adequate provision for compensation, education, accommodation and employment.

- B. The proposed law must seek apology for historical social injustice meted out to people employed in manual scavenging from generation.
- C. Ensure participation of community and organizations working on issues related to scavenging in a national level survey, which must be organized under this Act
- D. National scholarship programme should be initiated for the children of liberated families. The scholarship with other necessary facilities should be given from standard one to post-graduate level.
- E. Five acre of land should be provided by the Government to family liberated from manual scavenging.
- F. Participation of men and women from manual scavenger community should be ensured in any committee constituted for development of people engaged in manual scavenging and those who liberated from the practice.
- G. One-time grant of Rs 5 lakh should be provided for dignified self-employment with adequate training for skill development.
- H. Employment for 365 days should be ensured for the people engaged in manual scavenging.
- I. Programme for rehabilitation of people liberated from scavenging must be gender sensitive as mostly women are engaged in scavenging work.
- J. Under the proposed law provision should be made for housing schemes, including Indira Awas Yojna that houses for Dalit community should be inside the village rather than in separate hemlets.
- K. In appointment of worker, assistant and cook in ICDS (Anganwadi) centres, only women from Dalit community should be appointed. Among Dalit, manual scavenging community should be preferred.
- L. Non- schedule caste like Dalit Muslim and Dalit Christian community engaged in manual scavenging should get all facilities and security as in case of scavengers from scheduled castes.
- M. People liberated from scavenging and their families should be made entitle for all government schemes on priority basis.
- N. Dry latrines or it vestiges in any urban bodies, panchayats and government office should be immediately demolished. Action should be taken on officer responsible for violation.

Indian Railway is the largest institution in the country who uses dry latrines. Railway Ministry must immediately prohibit this practice and for next three years must present progress report in every session of Parliament. So that Government of India can ensure abolishment of scavenging in Indian Railway in stipulated time.

Inclusion of manual scavengers' families and those families who have left manual scavenging in BPL List: Socio-Economic survey conducted by Government of India has an automatic provision for including manual scavengers in BPL list. But no State Government wants to admit the existence of manual scavengers in their State and hence they are knowingly omitted from the list. Thus, there should be a provision that the families which were engaged in manual scavenging till 5th June 1993 {date of the implementation of "The Employment of Manual

Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act 1993”} or after that should be automatically included in BPL list.

Such provision has been done by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. In the letter from Ministry dated 8th June 2011 (No 1014/28/2007 – SCD-V), sent to Secretaries of SC Welfare Department of all States and Union Territories, a provision has been done regarding scholarship of children of families engaged in ‘*unclean occupations*’ . Earlier, scholarships of children whose families left the practice of manual scavenging was stopped but according to this letter, there is a provision for scholarship for children whose families were engaged till the enabling of Act of 1993 or after that.

Rehabilitation of freed families to include Indira Awas Yojana: In Rural areas, the problem of housing of families freed from and engaged in manual scavenging is very serious. Looking at this, these families should be given priority in getting the benefit of Indira Awas Yojna. There should also be provision of providing them land plot as well. It should be ensured that such plots should be in mainstream village and not excluded or outside the village.

Formation of a Coordination Committee: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Housing and Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Railways, Planning Commission etc have a key role to play in eradication of practice of manual scavenging and rehabilitation of families freed from it. Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Labour are also key elements as mostly women are engaged in this practice. Thus, we recommend that a coordination committee should be formed with representation of all eight ministries so as to work together.

National level monitoring system: Government of India should form a national level monitoring committee which keeps a constant eye on the practice of manual scavenging. This committee may consist of representative from Ministry, public representatives, state representatives, community representatives as well as representatives from civil society organizations.

Complete audit: Complete audit of all schemes made after 1993 for rehabilitation and abolishment of manual scavenging by the Government of India. This audited should be organized by higher level authority or Auditor General of India (CAG) in participation with community and their organizations.

Survey in rural India through community participation: Census 2011 shows that states of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Delhi NCR, Rajasthan and Jharkhand have very few dry latrines. But surveys conducted by *Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan* and other organizations have clearly shown the existence of dry latrines in these states as well and the practice of manual scavenging is going on in these states at large scale. Number of dry latrines is shown negligible in states where manual scavenging is clearly seen. This is not surprising because State Governments do not want to accept the fact that the practice of manual scavenging is going on in their states. Rural areas are more prone to this

thus Ministry should undertake a nationwide survey to come out with authentic data which will help in better planning of laws and schemes.

Gender aspect: All rehabilitation schemes and programmes must be totally redesigned for the women that make up 98 per cent of the workforce enslaved by this exploitative tradition.

Status Report: The Centre and each state government should draw up and publish a white paper every six months up to April 2013 on the situation as regards manual scavenging and dry latrines in their jurisdictions. A national task force consisting of the liberated women and representatives of the government (ministries/departments of social justice, urban development, rural development) and the concerned NGOs should be formed that will closely monitor the progress in eradication of manual scavenging over the next two years.