

# LEGALFOXES LAW TIMES

## DARK SIDE OF THE COUNTRY: MANUAL SCAVENGING

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### INTRODUCTION

In India many of the jobs are not divided on the basis of skills, but on the basis of caste and religion. The collection and cleaning of human excreta from private/public dry toilets, open drains etc is the job, tendered to manual scavengers. This is a kind of a job which no one wants to do for their living willingly. Most important job which is essential to run a country, but it has been disregarded by society repeatedly. This job has various hazards to the scavengers as well as their families. As per a study conducted in Chennai, of 30 manual scavengers, 90% of the manual scavengers were scheduled caste community and the rest were mostly backward class people. Only a few were feeling good about their health condition, many of them had eye, ear infection and most of them had low vision and other eye related problems. More than one third of the respondents had bleeding issues in their ear. The critical health problems generally faced by manual scavengers are, Bronchitis, Tuberculosis, Asthma, Nausea, and typhoid and many other diseases caused by dealing with human excreta.<sup>1</sup>

Despite of the health issues they also face social discrimination. Most of them are considered as untouchables, even though The Constitution of India, 1950 has abolished this custom and given every citizen equal status. They have separate living areas with poor hygiene conditions. Poor public toilets, most of the time water isn't accessible in there.

With the following difficulties in their lives and risky jobs, they do not get compensation for injuries occurring while working. Manual scavenging is a death trap which has been practiced since ages.

### MEANING OF MANUAL SCAVENGING

<sup>1</sup> Sathish Kumar K, "A study on occupational hazards faced by manual scavengers: with special reference to social work intervention" Volume 3 National Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development 41 (2018).

Manual Scavenger is the act of removing the waste from toilets or cleaning the sewers. In simple words, it can be said that manual scavenging is the job to remove the untreated human excreta from the toilets with bare hands or no safety gears.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRY LATRINES (PROHIBITION) ACT,1993 defines Manual Scavenger as- “a person engaged in or employed carrying human excreta and the expression "manual scavenging" shall be construed accordingly”.<sup>2</sup>

As per THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT, 2013 manual scavenger means-

“A person engaged or employed, at the commencement of this Act or at any time thereafter, by an individual or a local authority or an agency or a contractor, for manually cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling in any manner, human excreta in an insanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from the insanitary latrines is disposed of, or on a railway track or in such other spaces or premises, as the Central Government or a State Government may notify, before the excreta fully decomposes in such manner as may be prescribed, and the expression “manual scavenging” shall be construed accordingly”.<sup>3</sup>

The International Labor Organization have segregated manual scavenging into three different parts-

- I. Removal of human dung from dry latrines and streets,
- II. Cleaning and washing of septic tanks,
- III. Cleaning and washing of gutters and sewers.

Manual scavenging though present in other parts of the world, but it has its chief presence in India. Manual Scavenging is vested in a hierarchical caste based system. Most of these workers are from dalit community. They are being called by different names in different states for instance, Chuhada, Mehatar, Lalbegi, Har, Hadi, Thoti, Zadmali And Mela etc.

<sup>2</sup> The Employment Of Manual Scavenger and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act,1993, s. 2(j)

<sup>3</sup> The Prohibition Of Employment As Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act,2013, s. 2(g)

For cleaning sewers, gutters, septic tanks etc, manual scavenger's basic tools are buckets, which are assisted by a sack. They keep the waste in the sack and carry it manually after that, take it to a place where it should be disposed off. All this is done without any safety tools.

## **ROLE OF CASTE AND DISCRIMINATION**

Caste and Discrimination plays a very vital role in Manual Scavenging. There has been a deeply rooted practice of culture and caste system going on in India since ancient times. People who belong to the scheduled caste are also called as Shudras. They are put down at the lowest position in the Caste System which is described by Aryan Society. The labor division in India is being done according to the caste system. It is the belief of Hindus that the low caste people are born to clean waste of elite class people and do all the demeaning and unhealthy jobs for the whole public. Manual Scavenging is the one of that job which is mostly done by the downtrodden people.

People belonging to scheduled caste are discriminated on the basis of employment, education and rights. Moreover they have to face torture both mentally and physically, violence and harassment while doing the work because of the caste based system prevalent in the society. Many dalit women and girl child are forced to enter into this job. They mostly clean the Dry Toilets and men have to work in septic tanks and clean the sewerage lines. In many parts of the country beside having proper tools and laws for disposing human waste still, people from dalit community has to do the manual cleaning, carrying and dispose the human waste. The working condition of these people is unbearable. They are not provided with all the safety and work tools. Due to which, many people lost their lives while doing this work. The Manual Scavenging is the threat to the economic and social aspect of the country.

*“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".<sup>4</sup>*

Although many steps are taken by the Government to proscribe manual scavenging but, still it is being practiced in many regions of India. People who are related to manual scavenging are made to live at those places which are far from the middle parts of cities, villages etc. Mostly in the cities and villages of India, upper caste people occupy the better locations and low caste have to live in isolated places far away from upper caste people's homes due to the deep rooted caste system.

In many parts of India still dalits have to face many kind of discrimination, they have been denied from entering barber shops, drinking water from public places, eating food in the separated utensils, entering into shops and disbarred from temples. Although the Indian Constitution provides equal rights and outlaw the practice of untouchability practices but still it is being practiced in many regions of the country<sup>5</sup>. They also face discrimination when it comes to wage system. Women who clean dry toilets receive less cash or many times no cash. Instead of receiving money they are provided with leftover rations, old clothes, grain during harvest or firewood.

There have been enormous social rights movements that have brought positive changes to the caste barriers, even then caste based system prevails in the society, due to which a lot of people suffer and go through bad times.

### **Human Rights and Manual Scavenging**

Men and women are included in the work of manual scavenging. Many times it happens that their human rights are violated. Though there are acts passed by the legislature to protect the interest of the manual scavengers, there have been many times when they have to work more

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<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Clifford Bob, "Dalit Rights are Human Rights": Caste Discrimination, International Activism, and the Construction of a New Human Rights Issue," *Human Rights Quarterly*, pp.167,173.

than the working hours and do not get fully paid for the work. The National Human Rights Commission it has defined the manual scavenging as “Manual Scavenging as one of worst violations of Human Rights” and this was stated at the workshop on “Manual Scavenging and Sanitation” which was organized in New Delhi on August 28, 2008<sup>6</sup>. For the betterment of the manual scavengers they also took step to United Nations also came forward to eliminate the manual scavenging in India<sup>7</sup>.

This work is a threat to the dignity and rights of the worker. They do not get respect in society all. International agencies likewise United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund, The World Health Organization And International Labor Organisation they all have taken steps to end the practice of manual scavenging<sup>8</sup>. United nations women addressed that dry toilets are cleaned by the 95% women and the International Labor Organisation they focused on implementing the government policies which needed to be implemented in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat to end the manual scavenging<sup>9</sup>.

So, this is how various steps were taken by many organizations to exterminate the exercise of manual scavenging.

## LAWS GOVERNING MANUAL SCAVENGING

“Untouchability” is a practice of discrimination, faced by the schedule castes. It was a custom to distinguish jobs on the basis of caste and religion and the above caste were only allowed to

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<sup>6</sup> Commission calls Manual Scavenging as one of the worst violations of Human Rights *available at:* <https://nhrc.nic.in/press-release/commission-calls-manual-scavenging-one-worst-violations-human-rights> (last visited on June 20,2020)

<sup>7</sup> UN rights chief welcomes movement to eradicate manual scavenging in India *available at:* <https://news.un.org/en/story/2013/01/431022-un-rights-chief-welcomes-movement-eradicate-manual-scavenging-india#:~:text=The%20United%20Nations%20human%20rights,based%20on%20caste%20and%20gender.> (last visited in June 20,2020)

<sup>8</sup> The Dignity and Rights of Manual Scavengers in India *available at:* [https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/the-dignity-and-rights-of-manual-scavengers-in-india/#:~:text=Manual%20scavenging%20is%20prohibited%20by%20both%20international%20instruments%2C%20and%20Indian%20law.&text=However%2C%20the%20prevalence%20of%20manual,position%2C%20abolishes%20untouchability%20\(Art.](https://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/the-dignity-and-rights-of-manual-scavengers-in-india/#:~:text=Manual%20scavenging%20is%20prohibited%20by%20both%20international%20instruments%2C%20and%20Indian%20law.&text=However%2C%20the%20prevalence%20of%20manual,position%2C%20abolishes%20untouchability%20(Art.) (last visited on June 20,2020)

<sup>9</sup> Cleaning Human Waste “Manual Scavenging,” Caste and, Discrimination In India, *available at:* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/25/cleaning-human-waste/manual-scavenging-caste-and-discrimination-india> (last visited in June 20,2020)

perform cleaning tasks. This operation of such a caste system leads to discrimination and the framers of our Constitution tries to abolish this practice .<sup>10</sup>

India had a caste system before independence, after independence Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar made efforts to remove such sin from our country. His motive was not to earn wealth or power but to earn freedom.

To abolish untouchability various attempts have been made, adding article 14, 15, 21, 23 in The Constitution of India are some of the steps taken for fulfilling his dream.

Indian Penal Code, 1860 does not provide protection to the ST/SC community, for that special law have been implemented such as “THE SCHEDULED CASTES AND THE SCHEDULED TRIBES (PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES) ACT, 1989” for stringent the laws and provide justice to the community. Strict punishment has been implemented in the Act.<sup>11</sup>

For prohibiting manual scavenging and providing equal opportunities to these people, EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRY LATRINES (Prohibition) ACT, 1993 was enacted. The Act says- **“Effect from such date and in such area as the State Government may, by notification, specify in this behalf, no person shall- (a) engage in or employ for or permit to be engaged in or employed for any other person for manually carrying human excreta; or (b) construct or maintain a dry latrine”.**

Yet cases of manual scavenging and sewer deaths still prevails in society.

For more assistance to the manual scavengers two schemes were introduced

- I. Integrated Low Cost Sanitation Scheme (ILCS) in 1981, and the
- II. Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) in 2007.

By ILCS, funds were provided to poor urban households to convert dry latrines to water flush latrines and SRMS aims to provide alternate occupation to manual scavengers, by providing them skill training, and a loan<sup>12</sup>.

To draw more attention towards the problem the National Advisory Council recommended Parliament for enacting an Act for the rehabilitation and rejuvenation of manual

<sup>10</sup> The Constitution of India, art. 17.

<sup>11</sup> The SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, s. 3.

<sup>12</sup> PRS Legislative Research, The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Bill, 2012 available at: <https://www.prsindia.org/billtrack/prohibition-of-employment-as-manual-savengers-and-their-rehabilitation-bill-2012-2449> (last visited on, June 5, 2020)



scavengers.<sup>13</sup> Also, for prohibition of insanitary latrines. As a result, on December 6, 2013 THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENTS AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT, 2013 came into existence with strict rules.

### **SEWER DEATHS IN INDIA**

In 2019, 110 manual scavengers died while working in sewer tunnels and septic tanks, 68 in 2018, 93 in 2017. Instead of decreasing, the numbers are increasing after a year.<sup>14</sup>

According to the Commission's report it was seen that 2019, has the highest no. of sewer deaths. As per a national survey conducted in 18 states of the country, our government received shocking results. 48,345 manual scavengers have been spotted in affiliation with this hazardous occupation till 31st January, 2020.<sup>15</sup>

The Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), disclosed that 282 manual scavengers have lost their lives, while cleaning sewers, tunnels and septic tanks between 2016 and 2019. Even after various attempts of the officials for solving the problem of manual scavenging, is constantly increasing.

While an organisation "Safai Karamchari Aandolan" states that, around 2000 sanitation workers depart their lives every year due to leak of poisonous gases and several injuries.<sup>16</sup>

For becoming a developed country it is necessary to raise and solve issues like that. We all have to live with dignity, this occupation is contravening that right.

The Supreme Court of India, has ordered to grant Rs. 10 lakh as compensation to the families of deceased workers.<sup>17</sup> However, as per a RTI filed to National Commission for Safai Karamcharis for asking the details regarding the grants of compensation.

However, as per the RTI, it was shown that 814 people have officially reported sewer deaths in 20 states since 1993, out of which full compensation of Rs 10 lakh has been awarded to only 455 families.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>14</sup> The Hindu, India's manual scavenging problem, available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indias-manual-scavenging-problem/article30834545.ece> (last visited on, June 7, 2020)

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>16</sup> Safai Karamchari Aandolan, A Movement for elimination of Manual Scavenging, available at: <https://www.safaikarmachariandolan.org/crisis> (last seen on June 13, 2020)

<sup>17</sup> *Safai Karamchari Andolan vs the Government of India*, Writ Petition (Civil) No. 583 Of 2003.

## MANNER OF LIVING

Life of a sanitation worker is very difficult. They face a lot of racism during their whole life, same goes to their families. Sanitation is a very difficult job, it includes low wages, risk of health issues, less safety measures etc. This job is so risky even then these workers do not receive optimum wages. They keep our surroundings clean so that we can live a healthy life, but very few of us think about their healthy lives. This job has a huge impact on their lifestyle. There are few things they face during their lifetime.

### a. Poverty

A sanitation worker works throughout their lives with very low wages. Most of them are manipulated and threated to work with low wages or else jobs will be given to anyone else. In the running competition being fired from a job is the scariest nightmare that one can have. Most of them are not aware of employment laws, remunerations laws etc. they work on contract basis but can't even understand the basic terms of a contract. As per an organisation "Safai Karamchari Aandolan" sanitation workers receives Rs. 180-200 per month, per household.<sup>19</sup> They agree to work for long hours with very less wages from what the government prescribes. Those who are working under subcontractors face more problems.<sup>20</sup> They all work without any protective gears for long hours in a very unhealthy atmosphere. They are not in direct contact with the officials hence not able to convey their problems.

Truancy in collective bargaining: workers are formed in several groups and sent to different cities to work. Many of the agencies are rotating them in various cities and towns which result in lack of communication with each other among the workers. Which also lacks gathering any bond and requests for collective bargaining.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Dheeraj Mishra, Jahnvi Sen, "Sewer Deaths- Only About 50% of Victim's Families Received Rs. 10 Lakh Compensation." The Wire, Nov 19,2019, available at: <https://thewire.in/labour/sewer-deaths-compensation-rti> (last visited on, June 7, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Safai Karamchari Aandolan, available at: <https://www.safaikarmachariandolan.org/crisis> (last seen on June13, 2020)

<sup>20</sup> Nehal Garg, Understanding India's Sanitation Workers to Better Solve Their Problems, The wire, Jan 31st, 2019, available at: <https://thewire.in/labour/understanding-indias-sanitation-workers-to-better-solve-their-problems> (last seen on June 12, 2020)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*



Further, while working in such unhealthy conditions that without any protective gears, leads to severe injuries and health issues. These workers have to spend a lot of their income for medical treatment. They are not provided any kind of medical insurance, even they are not allowed to take sick leaves and further cut off their salary for taking sick leaves.<sup>22</sup>

b. Health Issues

Abundant of diseases they face during life span. Various injuries, social anxiety, infections, etc are not surprising for this class. East Delhi Municipal Corporation had organised a health care camp where they examined 2600 workers. Majority of them had breathing problems and asthma. 1200 of those workers were suffering from eye infections. Dr Ajay Lekhi, EDMC chief administrative medical officer concluded that, they clean roads, skeptic tanks, tunnels etc with bare hands and without masks. Operating in dust and germs from the garbage damages their health a lot.<sup>23</sup>

Average life expectancy of a sanitation worker is only 50 years old.<sup>24</sup> Workers and their families face many diseases throughout their lives.

c. SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

This is very sad to say, in spite of working so hard for the society, they face discrimination by them only. Before independence there were certain rules for them to live. As per caste system they had given the tag of “**Untouchables**” Earlier this community was not allowed to eat ghee. Ghee (clarified butter) is a rich source of vitamins, minerals, phenolic antioxidants etc. Only the higher class was allowed to consume ghee. Even if a lower class person can afford to buy ghee, still they were forced by the upper class community to not consume ghee, as it was a symbol of prestige.

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<sup>22</sup> Nehal Garg, Understanding India's Sanitation Workers to Better Solve Their Problems, The wire, Jan 31st, 2019, available at: <https://thewire.in/labour/understanding-indias-sanitation-workers-to-better-solve-their-problems> (last seen on June 12, 2020)

<sup>23</sup> Alok KN Mishra, “One-third of safai staff at health camp report breathing problems” Times of India, Sept 30, 2007. available at: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/one-third-of-safai-staff-at-health-camp-report-breathing-problems/articleshow/60888528.cms> (last seen on June 16, 2020)

<sup>24</sup> Counterview.org, A new study finds that manual scavengers in India live in segregated localities without any social or economic protection available at: <https://counterview.org/2014/01/15/a-new-study-finds-that-manual-scavengers-in-india-live-in-segregated-localities-without-any-social-or-economic-protection/> (last seen on June 16, 2020)

This class was not allowed to ride a horse, sit on chairs, get education, enter temples etc. All these strict rules were made for them so that the higher class can dominate them.

Well it is quite a relief that all these rules have been changed and Article 17 of The Constitution of India, 1950 unequivocally states that” Abolition of Untouchability-Untouchability is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden The enforcement of any disability arising out of Untouchability shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law”.<sup>25</sup>

Situation of present time is much better but not a hundred percent fine. Still they face a lot of social discrimination, because of their work and caste. I have personally observed this discrimination during an internship in city of Jaipur. I was assigned to do a survey and collect information on manual scavenging. I met a boy of approx 13years old, his mother told me that his school teacher used to ask him to clean toilets because he is a child of a manual scavenger. This was the most terrifying thing to hear.

It proves even after making laws, there situation against social discrimination have not chnged.

### **WHY DOES ANYONE CHOOSE TO ME A MANUAL SCAVENGER?**

There are many reasons which give rise to this work of. Majority of the workers are working unwillingly, but they have to, for living, fulfill all their needs and look after their family. Here are the main reasons which lead to the practice of manual scavenging:-

#### **I. Lack of Latrines**

In the ancient times people had no toilets in their homes so they used to go to open filed and extract their waste in the open field. If we talk about today, in most of the houses on the village level they do not use toilets or even if they have toilets at their home they still prefer to go to the open field. So, practice of going into fields is still prevalent. This pollutes the environment. Dry Latrines are mostly used in the urban areas which is a major cause for the manual scavenger. In India there are round about 26 million

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<sup>25</sup> The Constitution of India, art 17.

insanitary latrines and it is shown in a report based on Housing-listing and Housing Census 2011<sup>26</sup>.

## II. Inadequate Rehabilitation and Less Employment Opportunities

In India there is a huge problem of rehabilitating manual scavengers. Even though there are many steps taken by the government likewise, **THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT, 2013** was passed to end the manual scavenging and assured rehabilitation but the rules of this Act are not sufficient and not implemented wisely to end this practice .

There are very few alternatives of employment opportunities available in the nation for this community, due to which this community has to enter into this occupation to earn bread and butter. Since, this work is a caste based low caste people are forced to do this work. They are not very much accepted in the other sectors.

## III. Social Disparity:

People involved in the work of manual scavengers are from low caste and they are being considered as untouchable because of their work. Upper caste people are ready to accept them in the society and involve them into their community. Many employer reject them from getting job, they do not get respect in society their children face the discrimination at schools. Apart from this many landlords do not provide them a house on rent. Separate utensils are kept for maids who are from low caste. This is how they are kept socially isolated which is the main reason that they are not still developed.

## **MANUAL SCAVENGING AKIN TO SLAVERY**

Manual Scavenging is indeed an example of slavery and bonded labours.<sup>27</sup> Human Rights Watch, a global non-profit organisation, published a report on manual scavenging. In which they quotes

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<sup>26</sup> Housing Stock, Amenities & Assets in Slums – Census, *available at:* [https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/hlo/Slum\\_table/Slum\\_table.html](https://censusindia.gov.in/2011census/hlo/Slum_table/Slum_table.html) (last visited on June 11,2020)

<sup>27</sup> Human Right Watch, Cleaning Human Waste, 25 August, 2014, *available at:* <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/08/25/cleaning-human-waste/manual-scavenging-caste-and-discrimination-india> (last visited on July 14,2020)

a campaigner who said that “The manual carrying of human faeces is not for a employment, but an akin to slavery.”

Here are some points that why the manual scavenging is not an occupation but a form of slavery:-

I. It is hereditary

For some of the low caste families this occupation has become their hereditary occupation. Their ancestors did that job and now they are following the same. It is also a compulsion for them to enter into this work. Their thinking surrounds only that work they do not think out of the box. So, it becomes obligatory for them to do this job.

II. It is caste based

Manual Scavenging is a caste based division of labor, basically which is performed by low caste people. They have to face many kind of discrimination. This division of labor is injustice to many low caste communities. Since modern India has been rejecting the caste system but there are many regions where people still face caste issues. Manual scavenging is the best example of caste based division of labor.

III. Performing other tasks

Manual scavengers are also expected to perform other low-born tasks. Likewise, they have to do the disposal of dead cattle, dogs, cats and other animals, they have to work as a maid, they are expected to assist the newly born child and they have to clean drains. All these works are performed by low caste people.

IV. Low remuneration

Manual Scavengers put their life into risk and then perform their duty. But they are not given proper fruit of the work done by them. They are paid less money and sometimes they are not given necessity items and that also in little amount.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To end the problem of Manual Scavenging, it is obsessively necessary to work from the core of the problem. The reason they all are engaged is either they are not skilled for doing another job or they are not discriminated against and boycotted by the society to work in other places.

After analysing the whole situation, there are various measures that will help to end this taboo.

### I. Education

Education plays a very important role here, Dr Bheem Rao Ambedkar has said- "*Cultivation of mind should be the ultimate aim of existence*". In India, children of poor workers are not much educated. As they don't have sufficient funds for the education, they are forced to drop school/college and join the same line of employment. As a proposal, the government should give grants to every child a sum of money for passing every final semester exam (in government schools). This will motivate students to study more and also they will gather some amount which will be helpful for them.

### II. Social awareness

Nagar Palika, NGOs, Health Officers, and Social Communities should create awareness among the manual scavenger community regarding health issues, hygiene practices, and sanitization processes.

Small workshops, events etc should be organised to thank this community and celebrate their honor of respect.

Moreover, the general public should be aware of legal implications regarding employment of manual scavenging. Once, anybody is arrested for employing any manual scavenger, an example will be set for the rest of the society.

On the other hand sanitization workers should be also aware of their rights and laws to protect them from being exploited.

### III. Rehabilitation and rejuvenate of Manual Scavengers

It is very necessary to shift these workers to other jobs. More employment should be created and this community should be prioritised. When this community will be shifted towards other opportunities it will not only help to earn money but also to raise living standards.

This employment not only affects the health of the workers but also destroys the life of their families. By providing them different opportunities to earn, it will also raise the living standards of their families.

#### IV. Enforcement of laws

Many of the laws are being enacted to protect the sanitation workers such as EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRY LATRINES ACT, 1993, Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) in 2007, THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT, 2013 etc but when it comes to implementation, these laws have failed to show results. Government is reluctant to provide their promises, not giving adequate punishments to those who are violating the rules. As a result this taboo is still in practice and will not end till laws are being implemented properly.

#### V. Technology

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has forged a robot named “Bandicoot” to replace humans.<sup>28</sup> This robot has a camera on the front and it is able to enter inside septic tanks. This robot has two arms and four legs which are designed for performance cleaning operations. The robot can be handled with full sanitisation and it won't affect the health of a human. Robots can be the best alternative to manual scavenging.



#### **CONCLUSION**

*“I like the religion that teaches liberty, equality and fraternity”*, this beautiful line is said by Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar. The man who not only inspired to abolish discrimination but also known as The **Father of Indian Constitution**. His only dream was to give freedom to every citizen of India. But the question is “whether all the citizens are free in this country?”

He quotes that *“Freedom of mind is the real freedom. A person whose mind is not free though he may not be in chains, is a slave, not a free man. One whose mind is not free, though he may not be in prison, is a prisoner and not a free man”*.

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<sup>28</sup> The Economics Times, available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/robot-that-can-end-indias-manual-scavenging/bandicoor-robot-replacing-manual-scavenging/slideshow/71935997.cms> (last seen at June 10, 2020)



Sanitation workers does not have chains in their hands but they are definitely meantly pressurised and torchered. Even in the current scenario, children of Safai Karamcharis have given cleaning work at the school, children of manual scavengers are asked to wash toilets.

So many laws have been made for the betterment of this community but the results are not visible. Life expectancy of these workers are less than 50 years, whereas life expectancy of common people in India is 69.16 years.

They work in very unhealthy, and dangerous conditions. People throw blades, glass pieces, razors, scissors and so many sharp objects. While handling the garbage these types of materials give several injuries to the workers. Many of them have become blind as these sharp objects cause eye injuries and they don't receive any compensation for permanent disabilities.

Indian society ignore these communities as they didn't even exist. We have seen many types of strikes. Sometimes public transport strike, petrol pump strikes, local market strikes etc. imagine if Safai Karamchari community went on strike, even for five days, vehicles will not be able to run on the roads, sewer lines would be block, hence no one can use toilets, houses will be filled with garbage smell. It only shows how pivotal this job is.

If we compare the situation from the previous time, we can see a lot of positive changes. These changes have kept a hope that one day the fight for abolishing manual scavenging India will succeed. For that every individual has to take part in the fight and treat everyone equally. One day we will achieve the victory of free India.

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