



# Scourge of Manual scavenging

A Case of Hyderabad



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### 1. Summary & Conclusion

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Even though multiple government schemes have been implemented and, various anti-scavenging legislations exist, the practice continues. Intervention by the legislative and judiciary have not seen much success in eliminating the problem. The manual scavenging communities still suffer due to persistent discrimination, lack of information, improper implementation of laws and lack of alternative way of livelihood. But the point to consider here is that there is a subtext of brutal oppression on the basis of caste also. What these people have been made to do and are still being made to do is a matter of national shame. Manual scavenging is nothing short of a moral tragedy. The daily routine of people engaged in manual scavenging should serve as a reminder to all of us about the harsh realities of the society we have created and are living in. The need of the hour is not just a law that prohibits manual scavenging but also a tangible and solid action plan to help those who are trapped. The following are the key conclusion points

- The manual scavengers in Hyderabad include sewerage workers, septic tank cleaners, manual toilet cleaners and SWM workers.
- The Hyderabad government officials believe that there is no manual scavenging happening in the city and are negligent about this inhuman practiced in the city.
- The manual scavengers in context of Hyderabad city are not aware of the hygiene practices and are not trained on the safety measures.
- The present workers involved in manual scavenging are not aware of their rights in terms of their development. There are few efforts taken by the government for sewage workers, where they were trained on the safety equipment, but this equipment are not made practically available on ground.
- The key concerned shared by all forms of manual scavengers are discrimination between contractual and permanent workers. Services near the work places, health funding aid and safety gears. The safety gears made available in few cases especially for SWM management workers are not upto the standards and are not suitable for the work profile.

## 2. Recommendations

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- Liberation and Rehabilitation: Sewer workers' liberation will come only when we acquire necessary technological changes, which will then render the occupation humane, dignified and safe in ways which completely avoid any direct human contact with excreta. The liberation of these workers cannot be conceptualized in isolation because they will lose their only source of income without a meticulous road map for meaningful rehabilitation as proposed for manual scavengers. The workers in regular or contract employment must not be terminated; rather they must all be given regular employment.
- Protection of Human Rights: Sewage workers, who do more hazardous work as compared to manual scavengers, face a very specific form of human right violation. Their human dignity needs to be protected and this can happen only when they get opportunities through rehabilitation equal to what manual scavengers will be getting.
- Introduce Proper Technology: It must be made obligatory that the latest technology should be provided for persons attending sewage disposal and it shall be the responsibility of the union and state governments to provide sufficient funds for the purchase of machines and equipment under different programmes and schemes.
- Ensure discrimination free, secure and alternate livelihoods by providing skill development and livelihoods training to women, linking them to government employment schemes and entitlements as well as ensuring their land rights. Vocational training linked to employment for young people, and support to liberated manual scavengers in building alternate livelihoods could go a long way in ensuring steady, stable livelihoods for the future.
- Create a favorable environment through community awareness by respective local authorities.
- Build the capacity of the community to promote rehabilitation efforts and self-reliance and also build leadership in the community with a particular focus on dalit women.
- Training the existing workers on hygiene practices and safety measures during their work.
- Health related aids in terms of vaccinations to workers, making medicines available for them, health insurances to the workers.
- Services for workers – Making available basic services to workers like toilets, rest rooms, cafeteria, water etc at their work places.
- Monitoring the wellbeing of contractual workers by incorporating required clauses in the contract and regulating the contractual workers.
- Regulation of septage cleaners – As 40% of Hyderabad city is dependent on decentralized sanitation systems, there will dependent HH on septage management workers. Thus, regularizing the septage management, especially in the peripheral areas of the city is required.