

# Livelihood and Access to Work *for Dalit Women* Engaged in Manual Scavenging

**Policy Brief**



National Campaign on  
Dalit Human Rights



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# Livelihood and Access to Work for Dalit Women Engaged in Manual Scavenging

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## Policy Brief

Author and Editor: **Juno Varghese and Devesh Bisht**

Concept & Research Advisor: **Beena Pallical**

Contributors: **Kalpna Biswakarma and Dolly Paswan**

Designed by: **Sajana J**

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Cover Photograph: **Sudharak Olwe**

National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR)  
8/31, South Patel Nagar, Third Floor  
New Delhi - 110008  
Phone: +91-11-25842249  
Website: [ncdhr.org.in](http://ncdhr.org.in)



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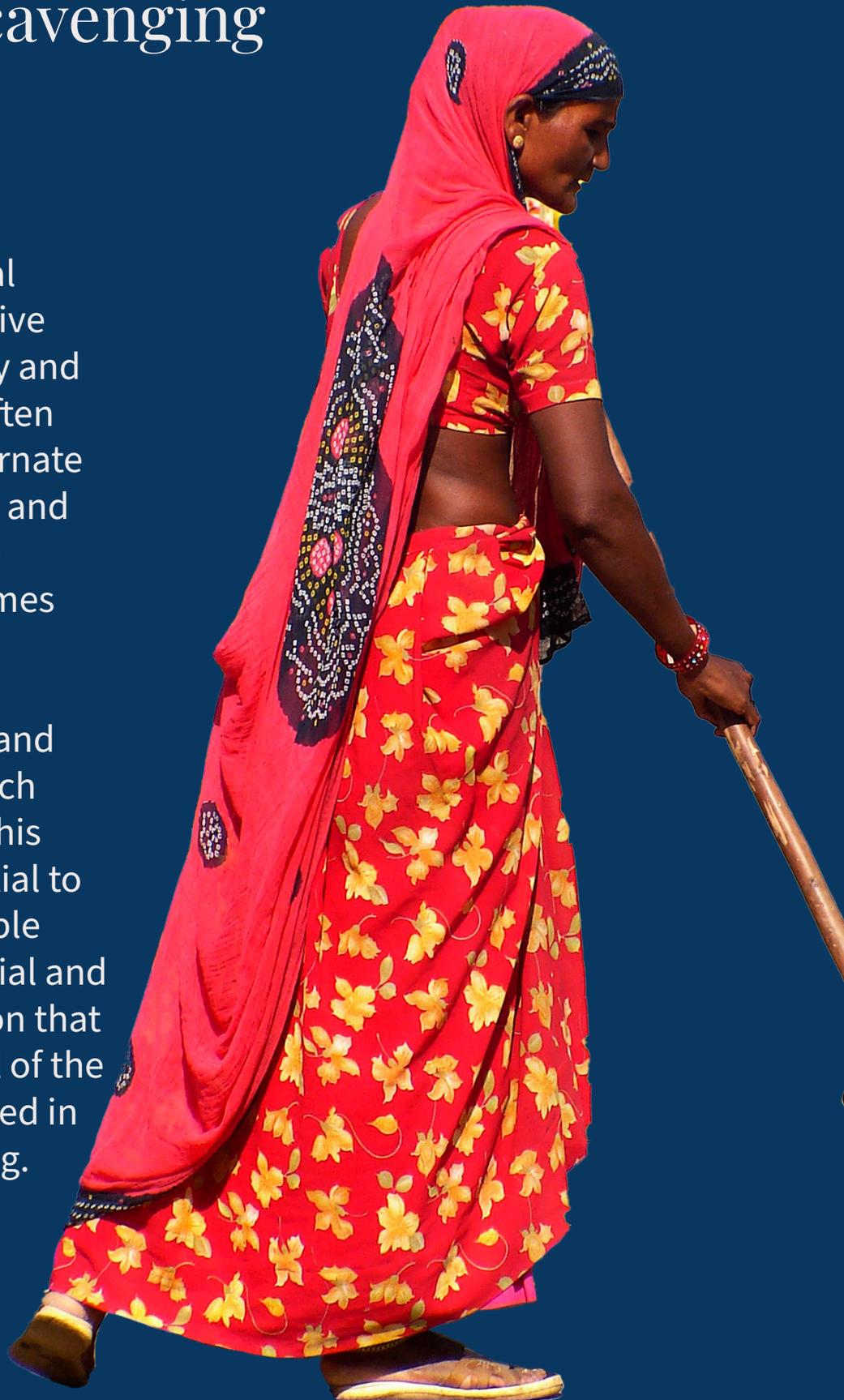
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# Livelihood and Access to Work for Dalit Women Engaged in Manual Scavenging

Most Dalit women engaged in manual scavenging often live in extreme poverty and insecurity. They often lack access to alternate livelihood options and very less access to government schemes and programmes.

A comprehensive and integrated approach to moving out of this structure is essential to address the multiple dimensions of social and economic exclusion that stifle the potential of the community engaged in manual scavenging.



# What is Manual Scavenging?

01

In India as per the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 ‘manual scavenger’ refers to: *“a person engaged or employed ... 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.”*

This is a caste-based and hereditary-based occupation, merely reserved for Dalits.

As per the research published by Economic and Political Weekly (EPW) in 2020, of the 1.2 million manual scavengers in India, 95-98 percent are women who belong to the following castes: Valmikis, Haila and Halalkhor castes, and from Mister and Dome castes. They are untouchables among untouchables, and are located at the lowest rung of the social order, and are ostracised by Dalits themselves<sup>1</sup>.

This occupation reinforces social stigma and perpetuates widespread discrimination. In India, it is sad to note that over the last few years, the deaths of sewage workers have increased, with 347 deaths related to manual scavenging recorded in the last five years.

As per the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), a total of 1035 people have died while undertaking this work since 1993. With a lack of minimum wages, a lack of protective gear, an absence of alternate economic opportunities, social security, and health risks the practice of manual scavenging poses serious questions on the human rights situation in the country. For people engaged in manual scavenging, the state often fails to uphold the promise of ensuring the right to dignity, personal liberty and basic necessities of life. This gaping inequality manages to proliferate not only through the gaps in the execution of laws but also through social and cultural prejudices.



**As per the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), a total of 1035 people have died while undertaking this work since 1993.**

Further compounded forms of discrimination and inequalities exist for women engaged in manual scavenging because of the complex socio-cultural reality of their intermixing caste, class and gender identities.

Owing to the archaic and discriminatory caste structure as well as patriarchy, Dalit women have been subject to various other atrocities in the social and domestic sphere making their lived experiences even more complex than their male counterparts. The lived realities of women engaged in manual scavenging make it imperative to look into the challenges they face due to the intermixing of their identities as women and Dalits in a nation that has failed to break free of the caste system.

To address the question of alternate livelihood opportunities for the Dalit women engaged in sanitation work and manual scavenging, a deeper enquiry is required on the gendered nature of work that these women are engaged in and their access to government policies and programmes to seek alternate livelihood options.

The brief tries to explore these points through the evidence from the field as well as from secondary sources.

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<sup>1</sup> Manual Scavenging: Women Face Double Discrimination as Caste and Gender Inequalities Converge, EPW, Vol. 55, Issue No. 26-27, 27 Jun, 2020

# Status of Dalit Women

# 02

As per the census 2011 SC form 16.68% percentage out of which women constitute 8% of the total Dalit population. Dalit women constitute 9.79 crore out of the total female population of 58.7 crore in India. To understand the status of Dalit women in India, it is important to trace the educational indicators of young Dalit girls from the perspective of the lack of access and discrimination faced by them in educational institutions.

As per the 2011 census data, only 56.5% of Dalit women are literate. In the secondary and higher secondary level, the enrollment ratio of Dalit girls is only 72.6% as compared to the other dominant groups with 95%. Similarly, in higher education, the enrollment ratio is 15.5% which is much lower than the dominant caste groups.

Alarming rates are also visible in the dropout rates among the SC girls, especially in the secondary level with 18.32% leading to lesser enrollment in senior secondary and higher education. Lack of financial resources along with other issues like lack of accessibility, and high incidence of discrimination are some of the significant barriers leading to the high dropout rate among Dalit girls.

Generational poverty is another aspect that has made the Dalit women the country's most marginalised and vulnerable community. As per the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021, 94 million Dalits out of 283 million live in Multi-dimensional Poverty.

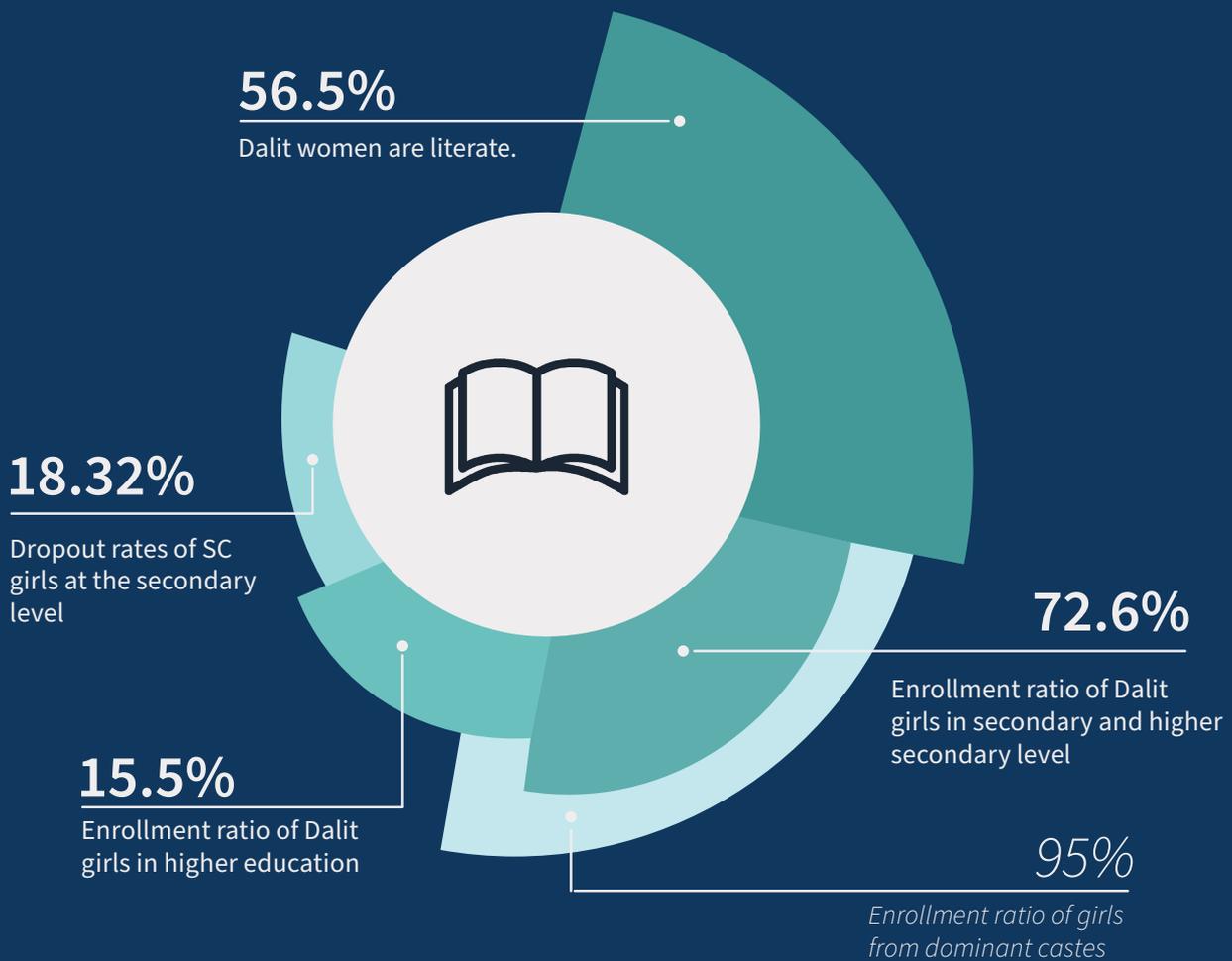
The cascading effect of poverty can be seen in every aspect of their daily life. As per the NFHS data, 75% of Dalit women face problems in accessing health care, and the average age of death for Dalit women is 14.6 years younger than for higher caste women<sup>2</sup>.

Dalit girls also make up the majority of the country's bonded and child labour and are often involved in menial forms of work. SC women are prodigiously underrepresented in skilled works and formal sector works, largely due to caste-based discrimination and also because young women often drop out of schools and colleges due to extreme levels of discrimination and exclusion faced by them and poor conditions in schools and hostels, forcing them to engage in a low paid job or the traditional degrading forms of works often associated with the caste status.

Dalit women are forced to do caste-assigned work without vertical or horizontal movement. There is ample incidence in the country where the Dalit children were forced to clean the toilet, school premises, and even beaten to death because of caste. Dalit women and girls are more vulnerable to atrocities and other crimes than other women and girls of different castes because of their caste identity. As per the PRIA report, 50% of urban sanitation workers are women in India. Women manual scavengers are the primary workforce in rural areas. Caste has indeed denied them their fundamental rights and freedom guaranteed by the constitution of India.

<sup>2</sup> Dalit Women and Girl Sanitation Workers: Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent  
[https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report\\_new-1.pdf](https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report_new-1.pdf)

# Educational Indicators of Young Dalit Girls\*



**16.68%** SC Population in India



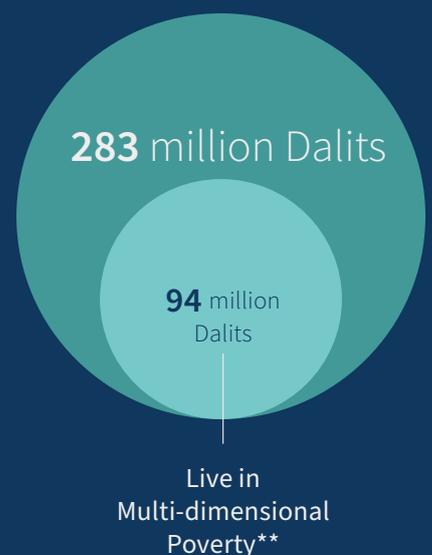
**8%** SC Women in India



**58.7 Crore** Population of Women in India



**9.79 Crore** Population of Dalit Women in India



\* Census of India, 2011

\*\* Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2021

More than **1.5 million** people are engaged in sanitation work, and **98% of them are Dalits.**

With **50% of women** working as sanitation workers in urban areas, Manual Scavenging of human excreta is exclusively done by women in Rural India



Photo by Sudharak Olwe

# Statutory Foundations

# 03

The fundamental rights of Articles 14,15,16, 21, and 22 talk about the rights and freedom of the Indian citizen irrespective of Caste and Creed, race, sex, religion, occupation, etc. In fact recognising the historical marginalisation of women Article 15 (3) states that “nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children”.

Under Article 46, the State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation.

The **practice of untouchability** though legally prohibited, is still practiced in India, which has stolen the basic human rights in Indian society. Casteism has questioned the foundation of its democratic ideas and principles laid in the Constitution of India.

# Dalit Women in Manual Scavenging

# 04

There exist additional levels of impediments for women engaged in the practice of manual scavenging. Situated at the intersection of multiple identities, Dalit women, suffer from numerous prejudices owing to this compounded and complex form of discrimination which finds its place in the domestic, social, cultural as well as professional spheres. They're not just subjects of discrimination based on caste and class but also based on gender which further makes it difficult for women to find a place of equality, equity as well as dignity in different domains of life and society. Issues of unequal pay, education, sexual harassment, supporting domestic duties, and physical and emotional abuse are just a few in a long list of problems that women engaged in manual scavenging face.

Women in this sector are mainly engaged in cleaning insanitary dry latrines and carrying and disposing of human faeces, and also in assisting their male folks in the cleaning of septic tanks. In rural India, women and girls of the Dalit community are exclusively working as manual scavengers of the dominant caste neighbourhood and manually cleaning the human excreta, and 50% of the urban sanitation workers are women working as toilet cleaners, sweepers, garbage pickers and are forced to do manual labour without the provision of protective gear or some time with a poor quality of safety kits such as gloves and mask.

The threefold discrimination of caste, gender, and poverty has led female sanitation workers into a vicious cycle of injustice and inequality<sup>3</sup>. India is a signatory to the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals and aspires to achieve it by 2030. Goals of 5,6,8 and 10 i.e. reducing poverty & inequality, gender justice, water, and sanitation, decent work, and economic growth are closely related to the Dalit community particularly women because these are the major areas where the marginalization of the Dalit lies.



Photo by Sudharak Olwe

<sup>3</sup>[https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report\\_new-1.pdf](https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report_new-1.pdf)

# Community Voice

Girja, a manual scavenger from Nibhana village in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh has been in the practice ever since she was married into a household of generational manual scavengers. She belongs to the Valmiki community. Educated only up to the primary level, Girja stated that even her children dropped out of school because of various forms of discrimination in government schools by peers and teachers. She shared that untouchability is still very much prevalent in her village as well as the surrounding villages of the Bundelkhand belt.

Even to this day, she has no choice but to clean dry latrines of upper-caste households with no consistent compensation for the work. She is often paid by her employers in the form of leftover food, old clothes and a meagre portion of the annual harvest but payment through money is still a foreign concept for manual scavengers of the village.

Moreover, any attempt at resistance is met with blatant threats of social exclusion and physical abuse. Girja and her fellow manual scavengers are only employed by local zamindars and any form of secondary income like working in the fields or grazing the cattle is also dependent on them since they don't own land themselves. So refusal of work often translates to the worsening of the economic condition of her family.

According to her, nothing has worked for the betterment of her community and even elected Dalit representatives have only managed to fill their coffers through corruption. When asked about schemes that exist for manual scavengers, she mentioned that she has no idea whatsoever about them and neither does any female practitioner she knows.

Girja strongly believes that stable employment and housing are imperative for community empowerment.

## *Inconsistent Compensation and Unequal Wages*

Dalit women who are employed as manual scavengers are often not paid for their work in cash and are instead provided with leftover food or rations. Women engaged in this work are hired as informal workers without any fixed and consistent wages, leaving them at the mercy of the employers. This feudal practice of payment through kind makes them incapable of using the purchasing power of other goods through monetary capital and also functions to uphold casteist practices like untouchability and social exclusion in rural areas. At times they are refused payment and compensation for months at end by upper caste households and are unable to fulfil even the basic necessities. Moreover, in the instances where they do get paid, their wages are substantially lower than that of men. Women manual scavengers get paid as little as INR 10 to INR 50 per day per household for their work as compared to men who get paid INR 300 on average .

## *Nature of Activities*

The women engaged in sanitation work have been engaged in this work for many generations. Women are mostly engaged in cleaning dry latrines, carrying loads of excrement in leaking cane baskets, clearing sewage, discarding placenta post-deliveries, working on railway tracks, exhume dead bodies while enduring sexual harassment, social exclusion, dismal wages, and a lifetime's worth of trauma<sup>5</sup>. Most of the women in our field research shared that they began to work as manual scavengers and garbage pickers after marriage, mainly around the age of 20. They face untouchability everyday while engaging in this work.

## *Access to Assets and Alternate Livelihood*

Ownership of land and other assets by women is critical to enhance a woman's overall well-being, economic security, access to food, livelihood, and housing, and also to enable socio-economic mobility. Dalit women lack access to income-earning assets and regular employment and depend mainly on wage labour. Moreover, they have very low levels of land ownership, which results in low socio-economic conditions and economic dependence on the dominant caste communities. As per NSSO data in 2009–10, 38 percent of Dalit women were self-employed compared to 62 percent of upper-caste women— this indicated that access to permanent sources of livelihood was not equal for Dalit women.

Under these circumstances it becomes extremely difficult for Dalit women to engage in alternate livelihood options, also considering the social stigma in the society. During our field research in MP and Maharashtra, many women were willing to take up alternate livelihood options and give up their current work. They desired a dignified livelihood but initiatives were not taken towards the same individually neither by the government. They shared that the government should take some steps to provide them opportunities along with back-ups such as capital, capacity and skill enhancement training, and sustainable means of earning<sup>6</sup>.

## *Gender-based Violence at the Workplace*

Violence based on gender is often understood only in terms of its physical or mental effect. Discrimination and prejudice based on gender, even if seemingly unnoticeable at first glance, which restricts the freedom of choice and autonomy of women in different domains of life ought to be included as ways of gender-based violence as well.

Women in sanitation work are often exposed to mental and sexual harassment and abusive words from her male supervisors and contractors. During our field research in MP and Maharashtra women workers informed that they are the victims of physical, mental, sexual, and verbal abuse in the workplace. Moreover, the grievance redressal mechanism is almost non-existent for contractual workers. They are also the victims of domestic violence at home, as found that the majority of the men engaged in sanitation work are into alcohol and substance abuse.

<sup>4</sup> Enabling and Supporting Women Engaged in Manual Scavenging to Successfully Move to Alternative Livelihoods: <https://www.wateraid.org/in/sites/g/files/jkxooof336/files/enabling-and-supporting-women-engaged-in-manual-scavenging-to-successfully-move-to-alternative-livelihood.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Manual Scavenging: Women Face Double Discrimination as Caste and Gender Inequalities Converge <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/manual-scavenging-women-face-double-discrimination-caste-gender>

<sup>6</sup> Dalit Women and Girl Sanitation Workers: Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent [https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report\\_new-1.pdf](https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/India-Report_new-1.pdf)

# Community Voice

Barely 5 kilometres from Nibhana, Urkara is another village in the district of Jalaun but interestingly, the condition of manual scavengers in the area is starkly different from those residing in their neighbouring village. Padma Devi, a resident of the village reveals that she started working as a manual scavenger around the age of 17 and until a decade ago, continued the work. Along with practicing manual scavenging Padma Devi continued her education and completed her matriculation in 1984. This had a phenomenal impact on not just her own family but on other members of her community.

Despite the conditions of Dalit female manual scavengers of her generation being the same as those of Nibhana, the next generation does not face discrimination in educational spaces. Padma Devi recalls that she herself tackled untouchability and various other obstacles but also asserted that ever since she completed her education she feels empowered. According to her, most women have left the practice due to the upward financial mobility of their families and now lead a much more dignified life. She reported that all communities share the same public amenities and spaces.

However, certain realities remain the same: they were never paid in monetary value, there are no Dalit female representatives to voice their concerns and only a handful of the young generation are aware of any schemes, if at all. She remarked that no government official has ever approached them for awareness or even for any kind of survey on manual scavengers. Furthermore, the upper caste Sarpanch of the village used to refuse the existence of manual scavenging and any effort to help the community was left unfinished because of the lack of awareness or the ability to produce adequate documents.

She feels that the government should provide employment opportunities to these women.



“ Padma Devi recalls that she herself tackled untouchability and various other obstacles but also asserted that ever since she completed her education she feels empowered. ”



Photo via Adobe Stock

# Schemes for Rehabilitation and Livelihood for Manual Scavengers

Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR) has legally prohibited the employment of the person as a manual scavenger in the country, after which flagship programs such as the ODF Open Defecation Free program were introduced to replace the insanitary toilets with the sanitary one and reach every household with the concrete toilet. However, the implementation and efficacy of this scheme is another question altogether. After the coming into effect of the PEMSAR Act<sup>7</sup> of 2013, the 2016-17 period of the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) scheme which undertook the rehabilitation process of manual scavengers was extended to 2020-21 as the objective of the scheme to eradicate the practice remained unfulfilled. The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment introduced the SRMS in 2007 to aid the rehabilitation of 'former' manual scavengers transitioning to other occupations. The government denies the existence of people engaged in manual scavenging on the pretext of demolition of unsanitary pits into sanitary toilets.

<sup>7</sup>PEMSAR Act has defined and prohibited manual scavenging in the country and has banned dry latrines. The act has directed a survey at the local, district, and state levels to identify the manual scavengers in the country and their occupational rehabilitation by providing them with one-time money transactions for alternative livelihood through the SRMS schemes under the act.

Government has not conducted a nationwide survey for the identification of the manual scavengers as directed by the Act of 2013, as per the National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) data, 58,098 people were identified and it further boasts that it has given One Time Cash Assistance (OTCA) to all the identified people but has denied its failure in conducting survey nationwide as the two surveys conducted in the year 2013 and 2018 and only 530 districts out of 766 Districts in the country has declared them as Manual Scavenging free as per the justification posted by the Ministry of Social justice and empowerment<sup>8</sup>.

In 2022, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) jointly reformulated the components of SRMS into the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE). The scheme aims to rehabilitate persons engaged in manual scavenging and those engaged in hazardous cleaning of sewer and septic tanks and promotion of safe and mechanized cleaning of sewers and septic tanks through trained and certified sanitation workers. The scheme also aims to formally profile practitioners, extend health insurance benefits, and provide livelihood assistance, and skill development training along with financial aid<sup>9</sup>. Notably this scheme denies the systemic forcing of Dalits into the work of sewer cleaning, completely denying the human rights perspective of this issue from the caste lens.

Some components for the livelihood and rehabilitation of female manual scavengers that are henceforth included in the NAMASTE scheme are:

- **Health insurance premiums under Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).**
- **Funding subsidy and capital support to procure safety equipment, and vehicles and support the dependants of manual scavengers under the Swachhata Udyami Yojana (SUJ).**
- **Skill development training for a period of up to 2 years with a monthly stipend of Rs. 3,000/-.**

Financial assistance schemes for female manual scavengers under NSKFDC:

- **Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY)<sup>10</sup>: A micro-finance scheme for loans of up to 1,00,000/- through State Channelising Agencies (SCA) and Regional Rural Banks (RRB) to female manual scavengers and dependents for petty trade/business and sundry income-generating activities.**
- **Mahila Adhikarita Yojana (MAY): Provides loans of up to 2,00,000/- to female manual scavengers and their dependant daughters for small trade/business and sundry income-generating activities.**

<sup>8</sup>NCDHR, Dalit Adivasi Budget Analysis 2024-25 [https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/NCDHR-Budget-2024\\_2-Feb\\_Single-1.pdf](https://www.ncdhr.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/NCDHR-Budget-2024_2-Feb_Single-1.pdf)

<sup>9</sup>National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE): <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1952044#:~:text=The%20existing%20components%20of%20SRMS,349.70%20crore.>

<sup>10</sup>Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY): <https://nskfcd.nic.in/en/content/schemes-programmes/mahila-samridhi-yojna-msy>

The table below highlights the allocation for some of the major schemes meant for sanitation workers or persons engaged in manual scavenging. Prohibition of employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act of 2013 has crossed a decade and yet looking at the allocations for the scheme like SRMS gives a very appalling picture. The table below shows the allocation for the SRMS scheme from the FY 2017 onwards, here out of the total allocation of Rs.415Cr only an amount of Rs242.26 was actually utilised for the community. In 2022, the NAMASTE scheme was launched as a central sector scheme, and in FY 2023-24, the budget estimate of Rs.97.4 cr. was made while in the year 2024-25 there was an allocation of Rs117Cr. we yet have to see the actual expenditure in this scheme.

National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC) is an apex corporation looking into the overall socio-economic upliftment of the Safai Karamcharis, Scavengers, and their dependents throughout India. However, the budgetary allocation has been reduced over the years under the same. Here again, out of the total allocation of Rs.240Cr from FY 2017 onwards, there was an actual expenditure of only Rs.115Cr. Inexcusably the table shows that the allocation for this scheme has continuously reduced across the years.

SCHEME	BUDGET	FY 2017-18 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2018-19 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2019-20 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2020-21 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2021-22 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2022-23 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2023-24 (In Rs Cr)	FY 2024-25 (In Rs Cr)	Total (In Rs Cr)
NAMASTE	Budget Estimate (In Rs Cr)	0	0	0	0	0	0	97.4	116.94	<b>214.34</b>
	Revised Estimate (In Rs Cr)	0	0	0	0	0	0	30.06	0	<b>30.06</b>
	Actual Expenditure (In Rs Cr)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
SRMS	Budget Estimate (In Rs Cr)	5	20	110	110	100	70	0	0	<b>415</b>
	Revised Estimate (In Rs Cr)	5	70	99.93	30	43.31	70	0	0	<b>318.24</b>
	Actual Expenditure (In Rs Cr)	5	85.76	84.8	16.6	39	11.1	0	0	<b>242.26</b>
NKFDC	Budget Estimate (In Rs Cr)	50	30	35	40	50	25	10	0.01	<b>240.01</b>
	Revised Estimate (In Rs Cr)	44.83	30	35	40	5	0.01	10		<b>164.84</b>
	Actual Expenditure (In Rs Cr)	5	30	35	40	5	0			<b>115</b>

# Recommendations

# 06

- 1.** Efforts should be made to create more awareness about policies and schemes on manual scavenging especially among women practitioners. The state and local authorities can organise awareness drives and programs in rural and remote areas where manual scavengers are substantially more unaware of the policies. State administrations can coordinate systematic annual awareness camps in these areas with the help of local panchayats. Sanitation and awareness campaigns, as seen in the likes of the Swacch Bharat Mission, can include aspects of upliftment and rehabilitation of manual scavengers.
- 2.** A multi-pronged strategy should be adopted to ensure that women currently engaged in Manual Scavenging are rehabilitated as per the law, more efforts to prohibit this practice thereby putting more effort in education etc.
- 3.** More funds need to be allocated to the financial assistance schemes for female manual scavengers. On a plain look at the budget allocated for NSKFDC in the financial years, it is evident that the amount of funds has plummeted alarmingly. This is particularly problematic because two important micro-finance schemes for women engaged in manual scavenging exist under NSKFDC, namely Mahila Samridhhi Yojana (MSY) and Mahila Adhikarita Yojana (MAY). Even the budget estimate for the FY 2023-24 is merely a quarter of that allocated for the FY 2020-21 illustrating that even less emphasis and attention is being paid to the financial empowerment of female manual scavengers posing a major hindrance to their rehabilitation. Additionally, focus has to be on the adequate implementation of schemes by central, state, and local authorities.

4. More emphasis needs to be placed on making the schemes and entitlements more accessible to the targeted group further ensuring that the socio-cultural prejudices don't interfere with the ability of the community to approach relevant authorities to voice their concerns. As seen even in the case studies, it is often the case that local representatives and authorities fail to put forward the demands of the manual scavenging community and even deny their existence in certain instances. To combat this, government officials from state administrations should routinely ensure the authenticity of the reports put forward by Panchayats.
5. Eradication/discontinuation of any informal practices that are responsible for the employment of manual scavengers in rural areas by the stringent implementation of the POA act and the activation of vigilance committees right from the local level because it is in rural areas where the women are enforced in manual scavenging work which is exclusively done by Dalit women most belonging to the Valmiki community.
6. Official surveys and studies need to be conducted on the recognition of the persistence of manual scavenging, the communities that are engaged in the practice, the implementation of schemes as well as the barriers in accessing the schemes. (Acting on a PIL on the implementation of the PM-DAKSH scheme and the PEMSR Act of 2013, the division bench of the supreme court headed by justices S Ravindra Bhat and Arvind Kumar asked the representative of the center about the official CAG report. The bench inquired that even after 10 years of the prohibition act why has there never been an official report or survey by CAG? The court proceeding also illuminated the fact that national surveys on manual scavengers were not done in rural areas which have the highest instances of continuation of the practice. The bench emphasised that apart from five states, there have been no state-level surveys as well bringing out the evident fact that government-backed surveys and studies have been inadequate on the issue.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Is There Any CAG Report On the Implementation Of Manual Scavengers Act? Supreme Court Asks Centre: <https://www.livewatch.in/top-stories/supreme-court-pil-manual-scavengers-act-implementation-235469?infinite-scroll=1>

7. Provisions should be made to assist Dalit women in representing their community as elected representatives. Again, as seen in the case studies, female representatives are rarely ever seen to represent the problems and demands of the community. Provisions similar to how local election seats are reserved for persons from scheduled castes, it should be stressed that seats are reserved for Dalit female candidates as well so that better representation of issues faced by women might be presented to relevant higher authorities.
8. A financial literacy program needs to be introduced among the women engaged in manual scavenging work and other sanitation work so that they can access and utilize the scheme benefits more efficiently. It is to be noted that formal education and literacy among Dalit women is still very low which is another added disadvantage for the Dalit women.
9. Assisting individuals, and groups of women accessing loans and other livelihood schemes for planning concrete and sustainable business models/prototypes. Mentoring them throughout their endeavor to establish sustainable and secure livelihoods is crucial for these women who are already deprived of quality education and business management. Even though these components are mentioned in the guidelines of PM DAKSH Yozna, practical implementation of the same is required on the ground.
10. The maximum number of Skill development Training centres which are registered under these schemes are situated in capital cities of various states, which to a large extent hinders the enrolment of women from rural areas to these centres. Efforts should be made to establish such skill development training centres and vocational institutes in the rural areas as well where the number of the people engaged in Manual scavenging and other sanitation work live or vocational institutions nearest to the residence or the colonies of the people engaged in MS and other sanitation work should be registered under the Scheme and should be upgraded to the level of the advanced training centres which are established in the cities and popular urban areas. This would encourage and impact women engaged in this work to enrol themselves in skill development training courses.

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## DALIT ARTHIK ADHIKAR ANDOLAN

Dalit Arthik Adhikar Andolan (DAAA) is a unit of the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights and is working towards securing and strengthening the economic rights of the Dalit and Adivasi communities and believes strongly in bolstering the agency of the communities. The main vehicle is access to public entitlements like livelihood schemes, education, entrepreneurship, and asset building through the constitutional provisions of budgetary allocations. DAAA believes strongly in the inclusion and promotion of marginalised communities in the economy of the country. DAAA makes strategic interventions in public policy, planning, budgeting, advocacy research, and implementation and monitoring of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Budget.



**National Campaign on  
Dalit Human Rights**



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