

National Consultation on Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers

Role of Government and UN agencies, Public and Private sectors, corporate social responsibility, and civil society



Organized by
Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan-Jan Sahas



In collaboration with

UN Women, Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICCI), Poorest Area Civil Society Program (PACS)



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National Consultation on Rehabilitation of Manual Scavenger's and Role of Government, UN agencies, Public and Private Sector, CSR and civil society

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SUMMARY:

On September 4, 2014, the national consultation brought together multiple stake-holders including representatives from Government, UN agencies, private sector, and civil society organizations to deliberate and discuss collaborative approaches to end manual scavenging, secure economic rights for people who have left this practice, and insure comprehensive rehabilitation to overcome all facets of discrimination faced by people whose exploitative caste-designated role has been to clean human waste.

In the National Consultation the obstacles in rehabilitation were identified and new ways were looked for. During the discussions, this fact came into light that whenever an effort is made for self employment at the village level, there is no cooperation from the village. If someone opens a shop, people do not come to the shop because of untouchability. This means that at the village level, the scheme of self employment is not sufficient for better rehabilitation. On the other hand, they are given the jobs of cleaning and related works only by the city corporation and the Gram Panchayat. The representatives of the corporate area who took part in the National Consultation have expressed a possibility of better rehabilitation through skill development. According to them, there are many opportunities in industries where better employment can be provided to the women engaged in manual scavenging through special training and skill development. Participants shared current initiatives to end manual scavenging and identified key areas for further action.

Three central goals emerged from this meeting:

1. Initiate a national-level platform bringing together stakeholders from government, UN, private sector, and civil society organizations to develop and implement collaborative approaches to end manual scavenging and support livelihoods with dignity for people who leave this practice.
2. Ensure that economic empowerment and rehabilitation initiatives support decent livelihood opportunities free from stigma and discrimination, and break cycles of caste-designated labor by securing education and scholarship opportunities.
3. Expand access to livelihoods with dignity by expanding existing training and employment opportunities, and piloting new initiatives through collaboration between government, UN, private sector, and civil society organizations.

BACKGROUND:

The effect of the law passed in the country in 1993 to eradicate the custom of manual scavenging was not seen in a very effective manner at the ground level. There were many shortcomings in the law. The rehabilitation of the people engaged in this custom was also not made a part of this law. Along with this, to eradicate this custom, no responsibilities were set aside at the government and administrative level for its implementation. Therefore a national movement in the

form of Garima Abhiyan was started, demanding a new law, and on 6 September, 2013, a new law was passed in which provisions for rehabilitation were also included.

However, Census 2011 and survey of manual scavengers in statutory towns carried out by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (Government of India) have reaffirmed continuation of the practice of manual scavenging. This is not to deny the fact that thousands of manual scavengers have been liberated with combined efforts of civil society organizations, people's movements, government and other agencies. However, it is estimated that nonetheless some 1.2 million manual scavengers are still trapped into this practice. There also exists a lack of synergy between liberation of manual scavengers and their rehabilitation other than the economic incentives by the Government and segmented intervention by civil society organization. There exists a vacuum and absence of realistic demonstrated rehabilitation model which could be applied across the country but the enactment of the new law has certainly raised hopes towards comprehensive rehabilitation.

It becomes imperative in this situation to analyze rehabilitation provisions foreseen in the act and strive for their effective implementation. In this context, along with Government many other stakeholders such as UN agencies, Government enterprises, Private and Public Sector especially CSR entities and civil society have a crucial role to play. Thus, it is essential to discuss appropriate role of various stakeholders and their possible intervention for addressing problems of manual scavenging communities such as decent livelihood opportunities, education and scholarship, stigma and discrimination free employment.

To mainstream the agenda of comprehensive rehabilitation and sensitize relevant stakeholders, a "National Consultation on Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers and Role of the Government, UN agencies, Public and Private Sector, CSR and civil society" was organized by Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan –Jan Sahas in collaboration with UN Women, Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DICC) and Poorest Area Civil Society Program (PACS).

After joining the Garima Abhiyan, we took a pledge that we will eradicate this practice of manual scavenging from the whole country. We helped many women get freedom from this custom. After leaving this work, I started selling fruits. But there was discrimination of untouchability in this work also. People were not ready to buy fruits from me. So I went to another village and started selling fruits. However, ensuring comprehensive rehabilitation of millions of liberated women manual scavenger is remained a great challenge.

Tasleem Bi, Tarana, Madhya Pradesh

THE NEW LAW AND REHABILITATION PROVISIONS:

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 was passed by the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in September 2013.

3.1 Highlights of the Act:

The Act prohibits: (a) the employment of a person as a manual scavenger, (b) the employment of an individual for the hazardous cleaning (manual cleaning without protective gear and other safety precautions) of a sewer or a septic tank, and (c) the construction of insanitary latrines. It provides for the rehabilitation of people currently engaged in the profession.

A "manual scavenger" is a person who manually cleans or disposes of human excreta in an insanitary latrine, an open drain, or a railway track. An "insanitary latrine" requires human excreta to be cleaned manually.

The Act shall override the 1993 Act and state laws on manual scavenging.

3.2 Identification of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers:

Every local authority (municipality, Panchayat, cantonment board or railway authority) has to carry out a survey of insanitary latrines within its jurisdiction. The authorities have to publish a list of such latrines within two months of the law coming into force and give notice to the occupiers to either demolish or convert them into sanitary latrines within six months.

The Chief Executive Officer of a municipality or a Panchayat may conduct a survey to identify manual scavengers. Individuals may also self-identify as manual scavengers.

3.3 Prohibition and conversion of insanitary latrines:

- Every occupier (and in some cases, owner) of an insanitary latrine shall demolish or convert the latrine into a sanitary latrine at his own cost within six months of the Act. If he fails to do so, the local authority shall convert or demolish the latrine and be entitled to recover the cost from the occupier.
- State governments may provide assistance to occupiers for converting latrines. However, non-receipt of assistance shall not be a valid ground to use an insanitary latrine beyond nine months of the law in force.
- Each local authority shall carry out an awareness campaign to enforce the above provisions of the Bill.

3.4 Prohibition and rehabilitation of manual scavengers

- Existing contracts with manual scavengers shall be void once the law is in force. However, the employer shall retain full-time scavengers on the same salary and assign them to different work.
- All persons listed as manual scavengers shall be rehabilitated with a onetime cash assistance, scholarship for their children, and a residential plot with financial assistance for constructing a house. One adult member of the family will be trained in a livelihood skill and given a monthly stipend of at least Rs 3,000 during training. A subsidy and concessional loan shall also be given for taking up an alternative occupation

ROLE OF THE UN AGENCIES:

Ms. Rebecca, Country Representative of UN WOMEN South Ashia, expressed her happiness over participation in the consultation and thanked organizer for inviting her. She appreciated intervention of Jan Sahas organization against caste and gender based discrimination. Further she said that UN WOMEN is supporting Jan Sahas organizing to liberate manual scavengers in 15 districts of three states. UN WOMEN in India is committed to end caste based inhuman practice of manual scavenging where mostly Dalit's are forcefully employed and importantly more than 90% are women. Due to that they face acute discrimination and practice of untouchability.

Further, she appreciated Government of India's unswerving commitment towards elimination of the practice and the enactment of the new act which is very powerful with clear provisions of identification, penalty and rehabilitation of the community. For effective enforcement of the act she stressed upon breaking notions and stereotypes against women. She drew attention of the participants on the language of the act, the act considers that manual scavenger is male however in reality 98 to 99 % women are engaged in manual scavenging. Hence such biased notions are biggest hurdle for women to enjoy their rights. In addition, it is not only Hindu Dalit's are manual scavengers but other religious minorities such as Muslim and Christian are also involved in this practice. And these religious minorities do not have Scheduled Caste status therefore deprived of SC welfare benefits and protection under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocity) Act, 1989.

Moreover, she said that existing rehabilitation programmes are focusing on economic liberation however it is crucial to change our notions. We should not limit our understanding that rehabilitation means only economic development, social development is must along with economic mobility. Women should have access to social security schemes such as Nutrition, Food, Maternity Benefits, insurance etc. At the same time discrimination against women need to be tackled effectively. In addition, the 2013 act has a provision of providing a skill development to any family member of the manual scavenger household however actually women are performing manual scavenging. Thus, how far women are going to get benefits of the skill development is remain a question of inquiry. We are all gathered here, we have to work towards ending this practice and for that we need stand together.

She urged representatives of private sector and UN agencies that they should work together for employment opportunities, education, skill development and capacity building.

Mr. JACKO CILIUS, Country Director, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) congratulated organizer for participation of many women from different parts of India, who have tried to solve a grave problem of caste-gender oppression and have succeeded in their efforts. He said that by breaking the age old custom of manual scavenging, not only they have done a significant job, but also they have given a new direction to the entire society.

Further he said that these women took the initiative to look for solutions for their issues. We received many suggestions in today's consultation. Now the time has come for us to begin bringing about change on the basis of all these suggestions. For this, we must make plans and put them into action.

The UNDP and other agencies shall work together. We will discuss about you with the Government and Private Sector. This is a very important issue for us and we will work together for it. We don't need to merely talk, but rather convert the talks into action. The UN family will always be with you.

Mr. Coen Kompier, Senior Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO)

said that the people engaged in the custom of manual scavenging belong to the most deprived section of the society and vulnerable in getting any cooperation from anyone. They are subjected to the maximum discrimination and considered as untouchables. Due to this kind of work, they fall ill very often. Their children are deprived of education. Now that a law has been made to put an end to this custom, we will have to see as to how the people engaged in this custom can be rehabilitated. We will have to do it on our own. We will have to speak to the government. We will have to speak to the UN Agencies and Corporates.

Further he said that the ILO is deeply associated with this issue and stands by the people engaged in this custom. We believe that if we do not have employment, we will not have nutrition and education as well. Caste becomes an obstacle in employment, which means that they do not get employment because of their caste. We have to create new opportunities for employment.

Mr. Pooran Chandra Pandey, UN Global Compact Network, New Delhi:

Mr. Pandey congratulated the organizer for this consultation and bringing together all actors at one platform. He said that unity is important and we have to stay together and united since our journey is quite far. Further he explained the Indian Constitutional Provisions that the sections 14, 17, 21 & 23 of the Constitution of India indicate that the custom of manual scavenging not only puts an end to your dignity, but also goes against the constitutional values.

Further he said that We must talk to the government regarding our potentials related to rehabilitation and the civil societies must come up with innovative methods. Corporate, UN Agencies and government should move ahead together. It is to be seen as to how to add education or learning to wherever you are, and whatever your age. This is a weapon which we can use to solve our problems. Skill development is important to give new dimensions to our livelihood. We should also have an idea about the number of people are engaged in this practice so that our action plan will be realistic. For this we need to conduct studies and identify their number and their problems. Based on the findings of the study we together could do advocacy with Government and propose new rehabilitation policies. In addition, civil society needs support from various section of society and for this we need develop an action plan. Finally, he expressed his gratitude and commitment to join struggle for ensuring comprehensive rehabilitation.

ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT:



Dr. R K Singh, Chairman of National Scheduled Caste Finance Development Corporation, New Delhi:

Dr. R. K Singh provided detail information on functions of NSFDC. He said that Corporation provides loans regarding education and business to the people of the scheduled caste community. We feel that government has made many rules, laws and schemes. There are two institutions – one is the government and the other is the market. We have to make our own efforts to take from the market. For this, we must become capable and make our own huge group. To make a big group, we can ask the other people of the Dalit community also to join us. A big group can do big business.

Further he added that along with this, they should be given employable skill training. There are many areas like – food industry, textiles, sewing and embroidery, etc. through which we can make an important place in the market. Only having a talent or skill is not enough. It is also necessary to develop the skill to sell in the market. The idea behind making a big group is to maintain our identity. This group should be able to demand its rights from the market. Until we become capable of taking our rights from the market, our rehabilitation will not be possible.

Mr. Nagraj, Managing Director of National Safai Karmachari Finance and Development Corporation, New Delhi

Mr. Nagrajan congratulated Jan Sahas for taking this initiative. He said that NSKFDC works for the rehabilitation of the sanitation workers. It takes care of the loan and education schemes. It provides loan from 1 lakh to 20 rupees at 0% interest. It also provides skill development for the workers. These people can avail the benefits of the scheme on the basis of the certificates of proof from the Nagar Palika, Nagar Nigam, and the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchyat.

These schemes can prove to be significant in the direction of rehabilitation of the women engaged in manual scavenging. Women should take the initiative to think as to what they can do and how much financial help they would require for it. Finally he expressed his commitment and promised full support in this endeavor.

Mr. P S KRISHNAN, Former Secretary of Government of India said that after a lot of efforts, this law was passed. Though there are many shortcomings in this law, but at least we have moved a step forward. Whatever can possibly be done under this law, we shall do it to the maximum. We are considering rehabilitation as a special topic in this meeting.

The first biggest employer of manual scavengers is the Railway, and the second is the Municipal Corporation. We must first approach the Railway and tell them to give these people training for cooking and employ them in the pantry car. They should be given the work of cooking and serving. Every station has a canteen. These people should be grouped together and given the contract of the canteens. Also the Municipal Corporation and Panchayat should be given orders that every ward should have a small office where there should be a plumber, an electrician, carpenter, etc. The sanitation workers should be engaged in these jobs. They should be given salary, not a broom.

To enforce the law, it is mentioned in the rule 11 (22) made by the government that – caste or religion will not be considered in this work. The manual scavengers of all castes and religions should be rehabilitated. An environment should be created where no one will do this work, Preventive Rehabilitation, so that no other person should do this work. Along with this, they should join with the corporate and give them training. They should take the benefit of Jan-Dhan scheme. All the sanitation workers should open a bank account. Many times brokers intervene in this work of rehabilitation. That is why it is important that the money of the scheme should directly go to the bank account. The sanitation workers should also be well defined in detail. If there is anyone who has ever done this job in his life, he/she should be rehabilitated.

Ms. Meenakshi Jha, Maharashtra Rural Livelihood Mission, Mumbai: Under National Rural Livelihood Mission, Maharashtra is one of the states that have developed action plans for rehabilitation of manual scavengers. Ms. Meenakshi explained MSRLM interventions; she said that MSRLM is working on two issues in Maharashtra. One is, the issue of dignity, and the other is of rehabilitation. In this context, it is important to identify the people engaged in the custom of manual scavenging. Manual scavenging does not imply merely cleaning the dirt, but all those unhygienic jobs which are done by man. We are preparing a data base of all these people. Then we will make a plan of social inclusion. This will be viewed as per necessity, very specially in relation to women. Once we get to know how many people are there, we will make our plans accordingly. Presently, MSRLM has focused work in two districts of Maharashtra.



ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR:

Mr. Milind Kamble, Founder of Dalit Indian Chambers Of Commerce and Industries (DICCI): started his speech by appreciating courage of liberated women manual scavengers. He said that the courage to be free from the custom of manual scavenging is very significant in itself. After freedom, now we have to find our own ways. All the entrepreneurs of the Dalit community came on a common platform under the Dalit Chambers of Commerce and Industries. Further he said that DICCI is willing to support and extend cooperation to RGA movement in the form of a workers organization.

He urged all participants to join together to chalk out a scheme for a rehabilitation of manual scavengers however he emphasized that we must focus more on skill development. Today, there are many opportunities in our country, where we can get better and respectable jobs. But for that, special skills are needed. There are many sectors like textiles, food etc. where we can make a better place for ourselves through skill development. DCCI can play its role in this training.

Moreover he explained that Government schemes and policies will go on, but we should come forward and work in harmony with the industries. We formed the DCCI in 2000. In 2010, an exhibition of the products of the Dalit entrepreneurs was organized. According to the statistics of 2006-07, there are 50 lakh entrepreneurs in the Dalit community. All of them have faced discrimination while moving ahead. We also can make way for ourselves to become entrepreneurs. Owing to economic liberalization, new people are getting opportunities. The new Dalit entrepreneurs are moving ahead in this field.

We will have to do ground work in this direction. We have educated people, women and young girls in our society. What can they do? This is an opportunity for the Dalit community. The government has made some provisions in the budget also. DCCI is with you and will continue to work for you.

Ms. Bhawna Katariya, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), New Delhi: Ms. Bhawna congratulated RGA-Jan Sahas for organizing this consultation. She said that we all know that there are some inhuman customs in India which rob the women. These women present here have set an example by waging a war against the custom of manual scavenging. After coming out of this custom, it is important that we open up new ways of progress through other dignified jobs. The CII can help you in this direction. The CII works with 700 companies.

The question is that what are the companies doing? Can we avail benefits from them? How can we reach till the opportunities available with them? If we can identify as to what kind of jobs the companies require, we can give the training accordingly. The CII has its own training centers where it can give training to those who have been liberated from the custom of manual scavenging. Apart from this, there is a requirement for jobs in many new establishments. You people know how to cook. There are many hotels where you can cook. In this way, we have to look for new ways of development on our own. Finally, she expressed commitment of joining the struggle of total eradication of manual scavenging practice and ensuring rehabilitation of manual scavenger.

Mr. Alok Shukla, USHA International: Mr. Alok said that USHA International is committed for enhancing skills of sewing, embroidery and stitching of women in rural India. As part of CSR activity we are running a Sewing School Programme where women are trained in sewing and stitching as part of ensuring their livelihood. Further he explained Sewing School, USHA international provides residential training in targeted villages where women gets training at home at the same time she is trained in maintenance and repairing of machine. Hence, it is part of residential training cum home based livelihood alternative for a village woman therefore we called this as Sewing School Programme.

Further he said that the sewing school programme is implemented in collaboration with civil society organizations. We have seen tremendous changes in the lives of the rural women, especially their income has increased by three times and importantly they don't have to go out of their village or home so which is very convenient for them and their family as well. Finally, he urged all participants to take active part in promoting Sewing School Programme as one of the rehabilitation package where USHA International would be happy to support but most importantly earning woman in house creates her own Identity and gets respect too.

Ms. Sneha Dicholkar, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai: Sir Dorabji Tata Trust had made a small beginning with the sanitation workers of Mumbai. She explained the journey of their Dignity Initiative started by SDTT in Mumbai, a photographer journalist had taken a photo to show how the sanitation workers of Mumbai work. The workers in the photo were seen to be neck deep in the muck while doing their work. After seeing that photo, we started working in that direction.

We contacted the Mumbai Mahanagar Palika. From there we came to know that people are sensitive. They know that such a custom is being practiced. But how can this problem be solved? The by lanes are very narrow; people have encroached upon the land and extended their houses out till the lanes. So how can machines and gadgets be installed in such areas? We came to the conclusion that joint efforts are needed to be made in this direction. We realized that mere

awareness will not do, because if they stop it, others will start doing. Therefore new techniques are needed. The team of Tata Group can work with the Mumbai Mahanagar Palika, and possibilities in this direction are being searched.

Issues of discrimination, livelihood and Social Security are critical in employment and Livelihood theme; however we need to focus on Self employment, Paid Employment and Social Security benefits. In addition, while keeping changing market in the mind we have to develop and enhance our capacities and need to do innovative things for ensuring sustainable livelihood.

Ms. Subhalaxmi Nandi, UN WOMEN

CHALLENGES OF REHABILITATION AND SEARCH of New Opportunities:

There have been many experiences in the context of the socio-economic rehabilitation of the community engaged in the custom of manual scavenging. The steps taken by the government in the last few years for their rehabilitation have not been very satisfactory as this rehabilitation was limited to providing them economic benefit only in the form of self employment, whereas the

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Communities who have traditionally worked as "manual scavengers," face significant barriers to entering the labor market, including social boycotts in retaliation for refusing to clean toilets in the village, gender- and caste-based discrimination to accessing employment, and corruption, such as being asked to pay bribes in order to be appointed to reserved government positions. For many, these obstacles are exacerbated by low education levels and an absence of marketable skills.

Coen Kompier, ILO

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people engaged in manual scavenging had to face untouchability, discrimination and exploitation in the society. In such a situation, the schemes of self employment could not be successful without their social rehabilitation. On the other hand, there were many shortcomings in identifying the people engaged in the custom of manual scavenging and reaching of the right stakeholders to the schemes.

During the discussions, this fact came into light that whenever an effort is made for self employment at the village level, there is no cooperation from the village. If someone opens a shop, people do not come to the shop because of untouchability. This means that at the village level, the scheme of self employment is not sufficient for better rehabilitation. On the other hand, they are given the jobs of cleaning and related works only by the city corporation and the Gram Panchayat.

Following are key challenges in Rehabilitation faced by manual scavengers:

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. 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.
5. 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.
6. The Issue of Dalit Muslims: Many Dalit Muslims predominantly Hela and Halakhor communities 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 protection under the legislations like SC, ST prevention of Atrocities Act 1989 and other schemes of the government for Scheduled Castes. 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.

ROLE OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY:



Mr. Rajendra Khosla, Director of PACS said that we have to walk a long way towards ensuring comprehensive and non-discriminatory rehabilitation. The practice of manual scavenging is still persists across India and it is blot on society. Further he said that PACS's intervention is focused on discrimination issue. When we talk about access whether it could be market or anything else but it should be with dignity. We did a campaign with civil society organization. Can we build an all inclusive platform where all people those are fighting for rights could come together? We had organized several consultations in different states. Therefore, it is important to stand together to remind Government about its duty towards downtrodden section of the society. With Jan Sahas we studied situation of manual scavengers in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, he emphasized on liberation and survival of manual scavengers, he said that what is after liberation? It is a problem of survival. Therefore, how can we see and act together on liberation and survival jointly? Further he proposed to develop a joint action plan involving Government, UN agencies and Civil Societies together to address issues of liberation and survival.

Ms. Manjula Pradeep, Navsarjan Trust, Gujrat: Ms. Manjula appreciated Jan Sahas efforts and organizing this consultation. Further she said that work is done where people speak their minds out. In this movement, the best thing was that people started speaking up. The women engaged in this work have many more talents other than cleaning. But for this, self confidence is needed. We can move ahead with self confidence and skill. We started the work of vocational training through our Dalit Shakti Kendra. Initially, 800 people took the training. If we implement the law correctly, there are ample opportunities. The civil society will have to put in lot of efforts.

In addition she said that the Constitution of India gives us the right to live with equality and dignity. Even today, a lot of injustice is done against the children of the Dalit community. They are made to sit separately in the class. The children are made to clean the toilets. We will have to

add our issues with the communal vigilance under the right to education. If we have to work for the youth of this community, then we will have to build their skill according to the industries. She expressed her concern over persistence of manual scavenging practice and problems in rehabilitation of manual scavengers.

Ms. Mamta, Water Aid, New Delhi: Ms. Mamta expressed her concern over failure of Government promises. She said that the government talks about the hygiene of the country. But we ignore that section of the people who keep the nation clean. Today about 60% of the people do not have toilets. In about 35% of the areas, there is no management of toilet facilities. It was never thought of as to where the excreta was being dropped and how to control it. We saw that a lot of talk was there about making toilets. The government has set designs also. But this design should be according to the needs of people. A mention has been made of the custom of manual scavenging in the population statistics of 2011. This is not a lonely battle. Everyone will have to participate in it.

Ms. Savita Kaushal, India Water Portal: Ms. Savita started saying that it is a matter of pride for women like us that you have won a battle. Further she said that her organization work on issues like water. Water is a factor without which nothing can move in our life. It touches all aspects like toilets, cleanliness, etc. We write on all that with which the issue of water is related. Have you ever wondered that there is discrimination of gender and caste even in the issue of water. You get water according to your gender and caste. This aspect has to be borne by the women. Just see how much of the issue of water is considered in this fight for the rights. In addition, she drew attention on linkage of water sanitation and manual scavenging practice. She expressed solidarity with the issue.

Ms. Shikha Bhattacharya, Research Worker, Human Rights Watch (HRW): Ms. Shikha thanked Jan Sahas for inviting for the consultation. Further she explained the HRW report "*Cleaning Human Waste: Manual Scavenging, Caste and Discrimination in India*". She said that study observed that manual scavenging is in practice in many parts of the county even today and the government is unable to put an end to it. Those people who leave this job are pressurized and they do not get police protection either. Another fact that has come to light in the study is that the government institutions, Municipal Corporations and the Gram Panchayats get the sanitation work done only from people of specific castes. In many Municipal Corporations and Panchayats, a kind of strange practice is followed where in the person engaged in the sanitation work has to do the job till his/her last breath and after him/her, the other members of the family have to take over the work.

From this study, this conclusion has been drawn that to eradicate this custom from the entire nation, efforts have to be made at the grass root level. The Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan has created a positive atmosphere in this context in the whole country. It has presented many successful examples of freedom from manual scavenging. It needs to be given a more extensive and intensive form in the entire country.

Mrs. Chhoti Bai, activist of Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan: in the state of Rajasthan said that there have been many experiences in the context of the socio-economic rehabilitation of the community engaged in the custom of manual scavenging. The steps taken by the government in the last few years for their rehabilitation have not been very satisfactory as this rehabilitation was limited to providing them economic benefit only in the form of self employment, whereas the people engaged in manual scavenging had to face untouchability, discrimination and exploitation in the society. In such a situation, the schemes of self employment could not be successful without their social rehabilitation. On the other hand, there were many shortcomings in identifying the people engaged in the custom of manual scavenging and reaching of the right stakeholders to the schemes.

Further she added that in order to put an end to the custom of manual scavenging, a law was passed by the Government of India on 6th September 2013 in which the main issue was rehabilitation. And appealed UN agencies, Corporate and civil societies to play their role along with the efforts of the government for better socio-economic rehabilitation in this direction.

KEY STRATEGIES FOR COMPREHENSIVE REHABILITATION AND WAY FORWARD:

During the discussion on the people liberated from the custom of manual scavenging and those still engaged in it, the most important fact that has emerged into light is that "there is no scarcity of opportunities". But there are many obstacles in the way of reaching till these opportunities. The government, UN Agencies, Corporate and civil societies will have to work together to remove these obstacles. In this context, skill development has come up as a major factor. There are many possibilities in the corporate sector and they are ready to play their role in training of skill development according to the needs.

In the discussions, ex secretary P S Krishnan said that the role of the government is significant, and added that the government should pass such directives, that the community of manual scavengers should get opportunities in various places. For example, orders should be passed to give priority to their appointment to cook and serve food in the Railway panty car, to cook the mid-day meal in the Anganwadis and schools and in various other jobs. Charles Wesley also expressed the importance of the role of the government and stressed the need for a regular pension and allotment of land to the women engaged in th custom of manual scavenging and those who have left this job, so that their socio-economic rehabilitation can be achieved.

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We must consider this rehabilitation in the urban and rural areas separately. In the rural areas, every family without a house should be given five acre land. The problem of the government is that it has a list of all the activities and people have to choose from that list only. But we will have to go beyond this list and think of new methods of rehabilitation.

Coen Kompier of ILO stressed on taking on the job of rehabilitation through the joint efforts of the UN Agencies and the corporate. He said that in this consultation he was amazed to see so many different people on one platform. The ONGC of India is spending 2.25 percent of their profit for social causes. There are 6 such industries that have 450 million dollars, but they do not know where to spend them. We will try to prepare MoU with these PSUs. They will use it to provide opportunities of employment for the people engaged in the custom of manual scavenging.

While expressing his views on the format of rehabilitation, Ashif Sheikh of Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan said that we need to see today that what can we actually do for rehabilitation? There should be comprehensive rehabilitation. For this, pilot projects should be initiated in different states, which can be implemented in other states also. We have to plan as to how we can take it forward in the next three years? We must create a platform for whatever we want to do, for which the UN Agencies, government and the civil society will review the progress in every six months.

Proposed Action

1. Initiate a national level platform bringing together stakeholders from government, UN, private sector, and civil society organizations to develop and implement collaborative approaches to end manual scavenging and support livelihoods with dignity for people who leave this practice.
 - Facilitate opportunities for further dialogue and cross-sector learning to develop effective livelihood and comprehensive rehabilitation programs.
 - Build alliances between various stakeholders to pilot and expand livelihood and economic empowerment programs for people who are engaged in or have engaged in manual scavenging.
 - Build additional government, private sector, and civil society partnerships.
2. Ensure that economic empowerment and rehabilitation initiatives support decent livelihood opportunities free from stigma and discrimination, and break cycles of caste-designated labor by securing education and scholarship opportunities.
 - Livelihood programs should be gender sensitive, and designed with the participation of manual scavenging communities and civil society organizations that work with these communities.
 - Direct Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives and funds toward ending manual scavenging, securing economic rights, and supporting livelihoods with dignity.
 - Invest in education, scholarship opportunities, and programs that support first-generation learners to attain higher education and employment.
3. Expand existing training and employment opportunities, and pilot new initiatives for communities engaged in manual scavenging through collaboration between government, UN, private sector, and civil society organizations.

- Provide technical and other assistance to develop sustainable, community-owned and operated livelihood opportunities through skill training and business development.
 - Invest in training that builds skills and provides ongoing support to in order to overcome barriers to securing employment with dignity, including discrimination and social exclusion.
4. Ensure that all support for sanitation projects in India require an immediate end to manual cleaning of human excrement and contain effective mechanisms for ongoing monitoring.
 5. Initiate a pilot project by the stakeholders collectively in 5 most affected states of manual scavenging practices from January 2015 and advocate for up scaling of the pilot in other states of India by the government and authorities.