



# Manual Scavengers of Karnataka



**An overview of  
Karnataka's Manual  
Scavengers Living  
Condition**

**K.B.OBALESHA,  
State convener,  
SKKS, & Director,  
Thamate.**

**Karnataka.**



- “So long as you do not achieve social liberty, whatever freedom is provided by the law is of no avail to you.”

**- Dr. B. R. Ambedker**



# What Exactly the System is?

- Manual Scavenging is a caste-based and hereditary occupation for Dalits (Untouchables) that is predominantly linked with forced labour or slavery. **Manual Scavenging** is an occupation that calls for the manual removal of excreta from “dry toilets”, i.e. toilet without the modern flush system in the Indian subcontinent.





# Why?



- why are people continuing in this occupation despite availability of other dignified livelihood sources? Why is manual scavenging in practice in towns and cities where other cleaner options for survival exist? When there are feasible and viable technological alternatives to dry toilets, one of the drivers of this occupation, why does the practice continue?



# Route of the Brutal Occupation

## The Caste

- “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.

## The label

- 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 leather work. By reason of their birth, dalits are considered to be "polluted."



# The Act

## **EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRY LATRINES (PROHIBITION) ACT 1993**

(NO. 46 OF 1993)

[5th June, 1993]

An Act to provide for the prohibition of employment of manual scavengers as well as construction or continuance of dry latrines and for the regulation of construction and maintenance of water-seal latrines and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual has been enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution;



# What is the issue to monitor?

- Establish the identity of the people – create evidence to say they exist
- State denies their existence – **THERE ARE NO MANUAL SCAVENGERS**
- Monitor the denials (health) of entitlements
- Create evidence

# State says...

**Suresh Kumar , Minister for Law says to media that there are no human workers engaged in manual scavenging.**



# Lesser human's

**Stanley of puduvinamitthu village is the other victim who died on the same incident along with bhoja.**

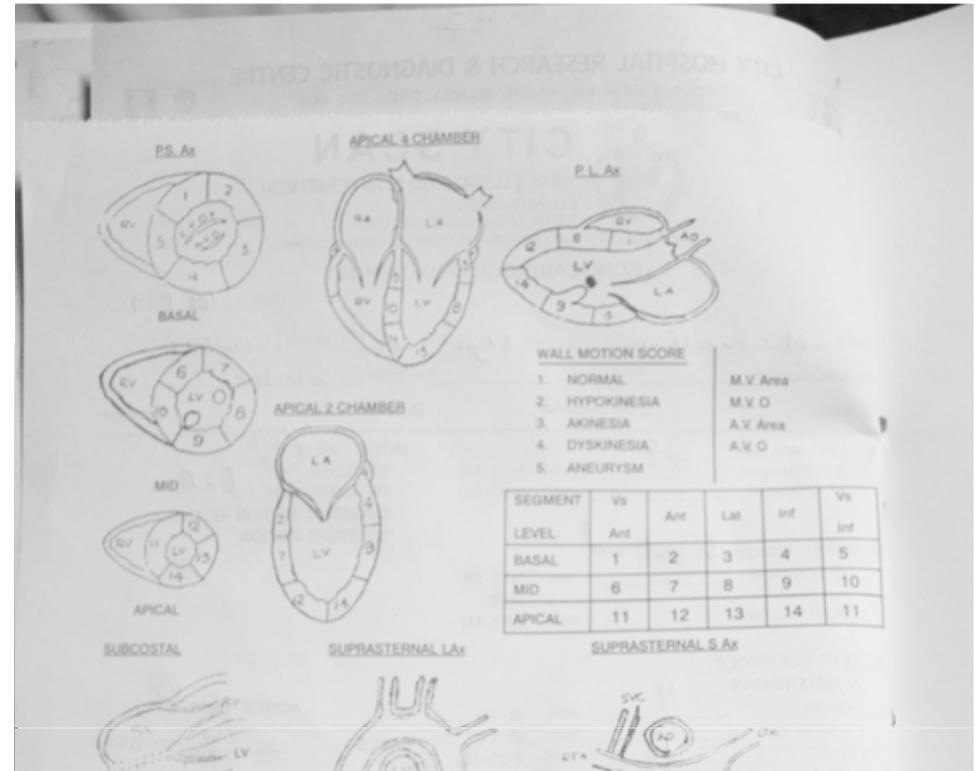
**Answering to an appeal made by Stanley's family.. Mangalore city corporation stated that we are not responsible for these kind of deaths unless they are our labors.**



# No mr. Padmaraj

Padmaraj a temporary UGD worker of Mangalore city corporation is suffering from serious heart disease because of his nature of work.

He appeal the corporation officials to fulfill the money for his medical treatment under 22.75 programme, which is bounced with the answer NO.







## The Ground Reality

- This kind of inhumane practice is still continuing even after 63 years of independence and 19 years after the law was passed by Indian Parliament.





# The Worst Victims are Women



- On an average scale, about 82 percent of those who deal with this curse of manual scavenging are women.



## Multiple methods used as part of community empowerment process

- Mobilising community – organising them, linkage with unions
- Creating evidence – by photo documentation
- Fact finding
- Community level research on health of the manual scavengers
- Affidavits by persons in manual scavenging
- Visualising deaths

The protest of savanur dalits raised several serious questions about the existing brutality.

Our study through:

- Video Documentation
- Photo Documentation
- Family Survey



Video documentation

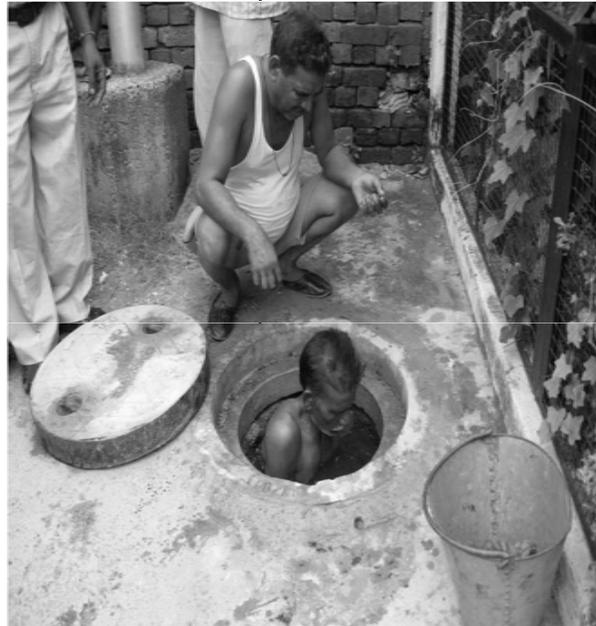
Photo documentation

Family Survey

Photo documentation

# three categories of sanitation workers:

1. Manual scavengers
2. Sewerage workers/septic tank cleaners
3. Sweepers



# Scavenger in Kolar

**Babu. Yet another manual scavenger from KGF fell on the floor when digging the pit of a private home.**



# Key findings

**Findings from the Field Study...**



# Disturbing Images...

By doing this kind of inhumane work Mallaiah and Chandrakanth of haveri earns Rs.250 per day.



# Scavengers in Gulbarga

**Women's belonging to Muslim community were active in manual scavenging along with their men's in Gulbarga.**

**Amidst of their extreme poverty these women were earning their daily bread by cleaning the pits of hotels, private homes and hostels.**



# The Bhangis and the Muslims...

**Shockingly the two communities which are engaged in manual scavenging in Gulbarga..**



# Homeless & Desperated

**Hanumanthayya & Chinnammam  
a bhangi family leads life in the  
street in Hubli.**





## Hard Truths :

- In the year 1993-94, the Karnataka state along with NGOs conducted a survey, throwing up a figure of 14,555 manual scavengers in the state in both rural and urban areas. In 2002-03 it went up to 26,004 and in 2007-08 it was 40,692 scavengers survey in rural areas to be carried out through Panchayats is in process till date. There are 2,800 dry latrines in the state.



# Advocacy of the evidence

# Night-soil carriers lost jobs

## Mr Minister, Do You Remember Your Promise?

K Ranganath & Senthilir S | TNN

**T**he septic tank accident brought to light an inhuman practice. Three unprotected manual scavengers, Kutti Prasad, Nagendra and Ravi, suffocated in the tank, and when they did not come up, the house owner reported the matter to fire personnel who rushed to the spot and removed their bodies.

Kutti Prasad had two sons, Ajit and Nitish, Nagendra was married two years ago and had a month-old child, while Ravi got married just three months ago.

### HIRED AS CIVIC WORKERS FOR 3 MONTHS

Urban development minister S Suresh Kumar had visited KGF on June 21, 2011, and promised to rehabilitate the workers. But nothing changed and the inhuman practice continued, just 100km from hi-tech Bangalore. Attempts to contact the minister failed.

Immediately after Suresh Kumar's visit, the district administration had given alternative employment to nearly 140 manual scavengers. Prabhu Kiran, a manual scavenger in KGF, said: "They were taken as daily wage labourers in the municipality for three months. But in October, they refused to give us work, saying the jobs were temporary and they had no funds to give us permanent jobs. They asked us to take loans. We refused and decided to take up work that we knew. We



Photo for representation only

An inhuman practice exists in 21st century India

### FORCED INTO JOB

In an interview with TOI in June, Kutti Prasad had explained the circumstances which were forcing his community members into this inhuman practice. "We don't have any other alternative. Manual scavenging is the only work we know and no one gives us better jobs. We have been doing this since 14 years," he had said. In Kennedy Telugu 6th Main alone, there are 109 families and at least one member of each family works as a manual scavenger. Many people are dead, a few are handicapped, yet the others continue their work.

wanted jobs and not loans."

He added that just a week later, the three men got a call to remove night soil. "Prasad slipped and fell into the tank and the others who went in to rescue him also died. We've lost hope in the system," he said.

### 80 EMPLOYEES WERE LAID OFF

Kolar assistant commissioner RS Peddappaiah, who rushed to the spot, told TOI: "We had employed 140 people but due to shortage of funds, had to lay off 80 workers. We had given them the option of taking loans from Ambedkar Corporation. It is unfortunate that they went back to manual scavenging."

Deputy commissioner Manoj Kumar Meena announced a compensation of

Rs 2 lakh for the families of the deceased. "Their family members will be given jobs in the city municipality council," added Peddappaiah.

Robertsonpet City Municipality commissioner V Balachandra said though the civic body had taken steps to create awareness among safai karmacharis against engaging in manual cleaning of tanks, they had violated the directions of the civic body.

Balachandra said that despite awareness programmes, safai karmacharis engage in such jobs due to pressure from middlemen who want to make money through such work.

V Seshadri, deputy SP, KGF, said police have taken up a case against the house owner, Sunil Anand.

## Katta's bail plea hearing on Friday

**Bangalore:** The high court on Monday ordered notice to Lokayukta police and also for placing medical records available with the special Lokayukta court on former minister Katta Subramanya Naidu, who is in jail.

Katta's bail petition will be heard on Friday.

### HN KRISHNA CASE

The high court has adjourned hearing on the bail petition filed by former KPSC chairman HN Krishna. CID police booked a case against him over irregularities in the KPSC examination held in 1998, 1999 and 2004 for selection of gazetted probationers. TNN

## Seven die as car, KSRTC bus collide

**Mandya:** Seven persons were killed when their car collided head-on with a KSRTC bus near Hulkere village of Pandavapura taluk on Monday. The victims — Tandava, 50, Siddaraju, 40, Krishnamurti, 30, Ravalappa, 50, Borappa, 56, Rajanna, 65, and Balu, 35 — were residents of villages neighbouring Mandya city.

Police said they were travelling in a car towards Sagarakatte village of KR Pete taluk to attend Krishnamurti's engagement party. TNN

On July 20<sup>th</sup> 2010 Manual scavengers from the *Bhangi* caste in Savanur had covered themselves with human excreta to protest their impending eviction and a denial of water by the Town Municipal Corporation of Savanur CMC.



# The Death Chain of Manual Scavengers



- **Two under age UGD Labors Rajesh & Santhosh of Hubli Town were Died while Cleaning a Soakpit.**



- **Yakoob Yalakapati of Dharavad Town, a Municipal Contract Labour died while cleaning a manhole.**



- **Kutti, Ravi & Babu - Manual Scavengers died in KGF, Kolar while Cleaning a Soakpit of a home belong to a Central Government Employee.**

Arjuna & Mahadeva of Sakaleshpur, were Died in a Soakpit while cleaning



# The Death Chain Continues...





# Some changes

- Evidence is accepted
- Local urban governments have taken alternative measures
- Discussed in parliament
- Manual Scavenging Abolition Act 2013

# Manual Scavenging Still On, Minister Shocked

*Many people in KGF still make a living out of manual scavenging that the govt claimed was eradicated completely*



Minister Suresh Kumar speaking to Prabhu who admitted that he earned his living by scavenging, which is a banned profession | EXPRESS PHOTO

## Express News Service

**KGF:** Rehabilitation programmes would be initiated for the manual scavengers working in the area surrounding KGF, said Law and Urban Development Minister Suresh Kumar.

The Minister informed press persons here on Tues-

day, that four days ago he received an e-mail which stated that there were people who made their living through carrying night soil, in KGF, in Kennedy's Andhra Line. Acting upon this, the Minister visited the area. On enquiry, one Prabhu said that he was doing the business privately.

According to sources, some of his family members were also involved in scavenging activity, a profession which was banned long back by the government.

The Minister directed the district administration to rehabilitate them immediately by providing temporary jobs in the City Municipal

council. If they are not interested, they will be accommodated under self employment programme according to their wish.

He also directed Deputy Commissioner Manoj Kumar Meena to watch out for such cases.

If anyone is found doing scavenging in future, they would be punished, and the person who instigates it would also be punished, he warned.

Suresh Kumar had claimed few months ago that manual scavenging had been eradicated completely from Karnataka. The instance in KGF has only proved him wrong.

The Minister informed that the state government had identified 430 families in 2008 and had rehabilitated them suitably.

He also directed the city municipal administration to keep a watch.

Legislator Y Sampangi, Deputy Commissioner Manoj Kumar Meena, Assistant Commissioner RS Peddappiah and DySP Seshadri were present during the visit.

# Government Denies the Facts

*The Karnataka State government informed the High Court that manual scavenging was not practised in Karnataka.*

In an affidavit following a petition filed by former Advocate General R N Narasimha Murthy, it has been stated that the deputy commissioners had certified that all dry latrines in respective districts had been demolished.

- A meeting chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary decided to review the practice of manual scavenging in the State, following the Savanur incident, the affidavit said.

# State Granted Sucking Vehicle

Siddaraju of Gulbarga Corporations temporary UGD worker is cleans the UGD chamber regularly with his hands beside the trouble making scavenging machine vehicle. He told that scavenging machine is a total waste which costs around 8 to 10 lakh. The scavengers uses the vehicle only to reach the working place.



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- Manual Scavenging Abolition and Rehabilitation of Scavengers Act 2013



Thank you JAI BHEEM !