

## National Human Rights Commission

### Proceedings of the Open House Discussion on Dignity and Human Rights of Persons involved in Manual Scavenging

held on 3rd January, 2025 at New Delhi

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) convened an Open House Discussion on **Human Rights of Persons involved in Manual Scavenging** at Manav Adhikar Bhawan, New Delhi. The meeting was chaired by Hon'ble Chairperson Shri Justice V. Ramasubramanian. Hon'ble Members Smt. Vijaya Bharathi Sayani, and Justice Dr. Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Secretary General Shri Bharat Lal, Director General (I) Shri R. P. Meena, Registrar (Law) Shri Joginder Singh, Joint Secretary Shri Devendra Kumar Nim, and other senior officers were present in the meeting.

Other attendees comprised representatives from Central and state governments, NGOs, representatives of sanitation workers, robotic companies, academia, human rights defenders, etc. contributing to discussions on emerging challenges, dignity and human rights of sanitation workers involved in cleaning of septic tanks and sewerage manholes by physically entering into them, leading to loss of lives too.



The technical sessions of the discussion included:

1. **Addressing the issue of Deaths in Septic and Sewer Tanks in India-** To discern the chronic, inhuman working conditions and frequent fatalities faced

by sanitation workers, demanding urgent reforms to ensure their safety and dignity.

2. **The Need for a Complete Ban on Manual Scavenging-** To address the severe physical and mental toll on workers, a complete ban on manual scavenging, as per the Manual Scavenging Act of 2013, is essential to protect their health, dignity, and overall well-being.
3. **Rehabilitation Measures for Manual Scavengers: A Path towards Dignity and Empowerment and the way forward–** To discuss Rehabilitation measures for manual scavengers that are crucial for restoring their dignity, providing access to education, skill development, and livelihood opportunities, ensuring their empowerment and social integration.

**Shri. Devendra Kumar Nim, Joint Secretary, NHRC**, began by warmly welcoming the dignitaries and stakeholders to the open house discussion. He emphasized that manual scavenging is one of the greatest human rights violations, drawing attention to the severe and persistent issue. Mr. Nim highlighted that despite the existence of the Rehabilitation Act, countless lives have been lost due to the stigma surrounding manual scavenging and the ongoing practice itself. He underscored the need for continued efforts to address this pressing issue and ensure that such violations are eradicated.



**Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal, NHRC**, warmly welcomed all dignitaries and emphasized the significance of the open house discussion as a platform to understand the challenges faced by those working at the grassroots level. Highlighting the objective of the discussion, the Secretary General noted that today, we focus on the dignity and human rights of sanitation workers involved in cleaning of septic tanks and manholes by physically entering, leading to exposure to hazardous wastes and even deaths. Stressing the urgency of the issue, he pointed out that the practice of manual scavenging continues to claim lives, making it imperative to take measures that safeguard the dignity and well-being of those involved. He also mentioned that the full mechanization of cleaning has not yet been achieved, which continues to pose significant challenge. Citing the case of **Dr. Balram Singh v. Union of India (2023)**, he underscored the challenge and stressed that manual scavenging is still predominantly carried out by sanitation

workers belonging to certain castes and communities, highlighting the deep-rooted social and systemic inequalities that need to be addressed.



**Hon'ble Chairperson Justice V Ramasubramanian, NHRC**, while delivering keynote address, he emphasized the importance of engaging with individuals and organizations working at the grassroots level to address critical human rights issues effectively. Highlighting the purpose of the session, the Chairperson remarked that it was not intended as a platform for delivering lectures but rather as an opportunity to listen to practitioners and field experts to enrich the Commission's understanding and inform its actions. During the session, the Chairperson shared personal anecdotes to illustrate how real-life experiences can transform perspectives and deepen understanding of critical issues. Addressing the issue of manual scavenging, the Chairperson noted that while significant claims of eradication have been made, incidents continue to surface, as highlighted in a recent report by *Hindustan Times* on December 30<sup>th</sup> 2024.



Acknowledging the legislative, executive, and judicial efforts to address manual scavenging, the Chairperson commended the combined contributions of all three wings of governance. However, it was emphasized that while progress has been made, the problem has not yet been fully resolved, warranting continued attention and action. The discussion also brought attention to the National Commission for Safai Karamchari Act, 1993, which, although adopted by 17 states, suffers from ineffective implementation. To address these challenges, the Chairperson invited all participants to share practical suggestions for proactive NHRC interventions, fostering a collaborative approach to ending manual scavenging and ensuring the dignity of sanitation workers.

### Technical Session I

**Prabhat Kumar Singh, Managing Director of the National Safai Karamchari Finance and Development Corporation**, highlighted efforts to rehabilitate manual scavengers and sanitation workers under initiatives like the "Namaste" scheme. Two groups were identified: traditional manual scavengers cleaning dry latrines and modern workers handling septic tanks and sewer systems. Between 2013 and 2018, surveys identified 58,098 manual scavengers, all of whom were provided a one-time financial assistance of ₹40,000. Additionally, around 24,000 workers received skill development training in trades such as electrician and physiotherapist, with a stipend of ₹3,000 per month during training. Financial assistance at low-interest rates was also extended to help workers establish alternative livelihoods.

To enhance safety, workers engaged in hazardous cleaning are provided with free personal protective equipment (PPE) and operational safety training. As per the law, sewer or septic tank entry is prohibited unless written permission is granted, supported by emergency sanitation units equipped with specialized tools. Mr. Singh emphasized the need for updated ground-level surveys, robust implementation of safety protocols, and integration of sanitation worker data into national census operations to ensure comprehensive support and sustainable rehabilitation.

**Rohit Kakkar, from the Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organization** highlighted the serious issue of **manual scavenging** and hazardous sanitation practices, with over 1,000 deaths reported in the past decade. Despite initiatives like the Swachh Bharat Mission and the enactment of **The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013**, which mandate mechanized sanitation, significant challenges persist due to gaps in compliance and inadequate infrastructure. The policy emphasizes mechanization, safety measures, and district-level monitoring to ensure worker safety. He recommended to replace manual scavenging with mechanized solutions, equip workers with tools and training, and enforce strict adherence to safety protocols and legal frameworks. He also emphasized to focus on strengthening regulatory oversight and accountability essential for sustainable sanitation practices.

**Smriti Pandey, Consultant, Social Justice and Empowerment Division of NITI Aayog** said that the NITI aayog collaborates with the Ministry of Social Justice and



Tribal Affairs on issues like manual scavenging. NITI Aayog has proposed several recommendations to help formulate guidelines and mechanisms to address these concerns. Recently, it highlighted the need for a robust monitoring system to oversee the Act's implementation and compliance at both central and state levels, emphasizing its critical importance for effective regulation. She recommended that there is a need to establish a comprehensive monitoring mechanism through vigilance committees, provisioned under the 2013 Act, for the effective implementation of the manual scavenging prohibition act and ensure compliance at all administrative levels.

**Sujoy Majumdar, Senior WASH Specialist at UNICEF India**, discussed the ongoing resistance to addressing the issue of manual scavenging, noting a general reluctance among stakeholders to openly engage with the subject. He emphasized the importance of breaking this resistance and creating platforms that encourage discussions, as such opportunities have been scarce in recent years. He also highlighted the significant lack of data on manual scavenging, a problem exacerbated by this resistance. UNICEF is collaborating with the Ministry of Rural Development to create a comprehensive database of sanitation workers across the country, covering not only manual scavenging but also related activities like waste collection, drain cleaning, and maintaining toilets. He cited Bihar as an example, where the state reported around 50,000 sanitation workers, although this number is likely an underestimation. He urged for greater focus on rural areas, where manual scavenging is a significant issue but remains underreported. Furthermore, he stressed the need for stronger enforcement of regulations to ensure that only authorized individuals, properly equipped with protective gear, enter hazardous spaces like septic tanks. He also pointed out the progress in some states, such as Madhya Pradesh, where sanitation workers have been provided with health cards and access to social security schemes, encouraging other states to follow suit. In conclusion, he recommended enhancing data collection, enforcing regulations more effectively, and ensuring that sanitation workers have access to health and social security benefits, with a particular focus on rural areas where manual scavenging remains a persistent challenge. He also highlighted the reported issue of child and women labour in sewer and manhole cleaning. He additionally called for a communication campaign for awareness of sanitation workers.

**Yusuf Kabir (UNICEF)** discussed the challenges in classifying solid waste collectors, particularly in rural and urban areas. He highlighted the issue that workers involved in tasks like cleaning septic tanks or sewage systems are often not accurately classified, making it difficult to address their safety and well-being. He emphasized that the focus has been mainly on municipal corporation workers, overlooking broader aspects like manual scavenging in urban settings. He further recommended that there is an urgent need for new guidelines to ensure the safety and protection of sanitation workers, including manual scavengers. The leadership of the Prime Minister should push for the integration of these concerns into the "Swachhata Hi Seva" movement, and more comprehensive training programs should be implemented.

**Baishali Lahiri, National Project Coordinator at the International Labour**

**Organisation**, began by referencing a 2022 ILO study on manual scavengers in India. The study highlighted the government's narrow definition of manual scavengers, limiting it to individuals performing unsanitary tasks, and noted the Swachh Bharat Mission's efforts to replace such practices with sanitary alternatives. Despite some progress, manual scavenging remains prevalent, particularly in rural areas. The speaker pointed out the confusion between manual scavenging and sewage workers, as both face similar hazardous conditions. While the nature of the work may have changed, the dire conditions persist. The speaker stressed the need for technological innovations to eliminate hazardous tasks like sewage cleaning and called for stricter safety protocols, such as health officers accompanying workers. She also recommended gender-neutral safety measures to protect both male and female workers equally in these hazardous roles.

**Smt. Chandrakala, Secretary of the Karnataka State Safai Karmachari Development Corporation**, addressed issues regarding the management and maintenance of Septic tanks. She informed that it was seen that the tank operators are not registered with any government entities and are hiring untrained personnel unaware of the Manual Scavenging Act. Additionally, she highlighted concerns about the construction of Septic tanks in congested spaces and lack of awareness regarding equipment. She recommended policy improvements for maintaining safety standards in commercial and constructed areas.



### **Technical Session II**

**Mr. Bezwada Wilson, National Convenor, Safai Karmachari Andolan**, emphasized about drawing separation between Sanitation workers and manual scavengers, as per The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013. He pointed out a crucial issue that females occupy a

major portion in the community of manual scavengers. 99% of the women are involved in dry cleaning latrines. Additionally, he stated that despite the establishment of self declaration centers, manual scavengers refuse to come out. Deaths in sewage and septic tanks have become quite common. Top priority in sewage and septic tank deaths are Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, Delhi followed by Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and West Bengal where deaths reported are more. Therefore, steps should be taken in prevention of their deaths. Thereafter, he gave some suggestions such as a survey should be conducted in such areas where manual scavengers are found. There should be proper data about the pre matric education given to manual scavengers because it is not provided at the ground level. He also suggested that minimum wages should also be fixed for these manual scavengers. It is pertinent to conduct surveys at the ground level to identify manual scavengers. The system of one time cash assistance should be replaced as it is not a proper mode of rehabilitation. He also mentioned that families of manual scavengers are most deprived. Despite the guidelines given by the judgments there is no proper household or any other amenities given to the manual scavengers is given. He suggested that the government should come up with a clear package for the manual scavengers. There should be a proper survey to identify manual scavengers in different areas such as septic tank cleaners.

**Mr Rashid karimbanakkal, Director, Genrobotic Innovations**, drew attention to two major issues:-1. Why are humans engaged in manual scavenging? 2. Why is there an increase in the death rate of manual scavengers? He further explained them by stating that there is a rapid urbanization due to rapid population growth thereby more people are pushed to clean. Traditionally, the sewages are cleaned manually and even with the help of some devices only 20-25% is cleaned forcing humans to let humans engage in the cleaning process. He suggested that Manual Scavengers should be provided rehabilitation in the form of training to use robotic workers.



**Mr Vimal Kumar, Founder, The Movement for Manual Scavenger Community,** suggested that there is a lack of representation from the community of manual scavengers. It is also pertinent to plan visits and check implementation of schemes at ground level. There is a loophole in training provided at ground level thus, it should be checked.

**Ms. Manjula Pradeep, Founder and Chairperson, WAVYE Foundation,** stated that manual scavengers are a kind of forced labour. Women who are involved in manual scavenging are often forced into this because of patriarchal societal approach. She mentioned some issues such as open defecation is still a persisting problem in the society. She highlighted the problem in various communities of Gujarat such as the toilets used by the rajput females were cleaned by women. The sadhvis of jain community use a system of toilet in their practices which is manually cleaned by manual scavengers. It is crucial to highlight that children from government schools are forced to clean toilets. She suggested that there should be monitoring where death of manual scavengers happened. She also added that contractors should be held responsible and government should take some strict action against them. Monitoring of open defecation should be checked especially in urban areas. Housing places of workers involved in manual scavengers should be checked. Awareness should be spread about the toilets made from new technologies among elders specifically. There should be a separate helpline for manual scavengers.





**Ms Meghna Malhotra, Deputy Director, Urban Management Centre, Ahmedabad**, highlighted that the workers are dying not only in sewage holes but also in skeptic tanks. The data states that 68% of all deaths are happening in skeptic tanks. The Average worker dying during cleaning is 2. She suggested that there is an urgent need to make man made skeptic cleaning as core public service by the urban local bodies. There is also a need to regulate and empanel private desludging market. There is also a need of citizen service charter for reliable citizen services. There is also another problem that the skeptic tanks are not build properly. It is also important to identify workers. She also suggested that there is a need of safe confined space entry and thus, required ERSU setup. Training with proper methodology should also be provided to workers to enter in the sewage. At the end she emphasized about the dignity of workers by providing their work as skilled labour and reflecting the same in their wages

**Mr. Thiru S. Sheikh Abdul Rahaman Joint Commissioner of Municipal Administration, Directorate of Municipal Administration, Chennai, Tamil Nadu** talked about the survey of workers in hazardous cleaning jobs; sanitary sewage and septic tank to understand the difference between Manual Scavengers and Hazardous cleaning workers as per the Act 2013. The state of Tamil Nadu has created a profile to capture the workers involved in manual scavenging moving to other professions. As state they have prohibited the entry of workers in septic tank cleaning. They have also provided a helpline 14420 to ensure that household does not engage in unauthorized cleaning. They have also allowed desludging vehicles to camp in their Sewage Treatment Plant Unit (STPU). In exceptional circumstances they are creating a system of ERSU to evaluate the entry into sewage. At the end he suggested that the workers should have common focal point to seek benefits provided by the government such as in Tamil Nadu where they have Tamil Nadu Cleanliness workers Welfare Board. He also pointed out that

workers are being provided vehicles for effective & safe cleaning and their dependents are given scholarships, training and education so that they can venture into other profession\s.



### Technical Session III

**Dr. Vinod Kumar, Professor of Law and Director of Centre for Human, Rights and Subaltern Studies, National Law University, New Delhi** referred to a public hearing he had attended, where the testimonies of people engaged in manual scavenging were presented, highlighting the loss of lives associated with this practice. He emphasized that we do not take human rights seriously if we do not prioritize human safety. Workers are often forced by municipalities and contractors to enter gutters, putting their lives at risk. The aforementioned public hearing generated 19 recommendations, which were submitted to the Government of India and forwarded to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). He questioned the necessity of humans entering gutters, asking whether it is a structural issue or a lack of technological alternatives. He pointed out that this practice is rooted in caste-based discrimination, a deeply entrenched social issue. Among the suggestions made were the acceptance in principle that manual scavenging should be abolished, the importance of taking legislation aimed at abolishing manual scavenging seriously, and categorical recommendations to the Government of India on solutions and the way forward.

**Prof. Sheeva Dubey, Assistant Professor, Media and Journalism, FLAME University, Pune** highlighted how the issue of sewer deaths is a pressing concern that requires immediate attention. As a Professor of Journalism, she emphasized the importance of making relevant data on manual scavenging publicly available. There is a need for a comprehensive investigation into violations, ensuring that

those responsible are held accountable. Despite the seriousness of the issue, there have been no significant headlines about Vigilance Committees apprehending those involved in such acts, she mentioned. She stressed the necessity of transparency regarding the availability and performance of machines used in sewer cleaning. Accurate reporting on the number of manual scavengers is crucial, alongside a thorough review of the government's mechanisms for addressing this issue. In relation to the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), she questions the absence of advertisements that explicitly prohibit manual scavenging, pointing out that the public largely remains unaware of such prohibitions. She discussed how a detailed examination of the budget allocated to tackle this problem is essential to ensure adequate funding. Regarding the NAMASTE scheme, she called for a systemic analysis to address the finance-related loopholes that undermine its effectiveness. She highlighted that manual scavenging is not only a dangerous occupation but also a gendered issue, with widows of manual scavengers, often referred to as 'sewer widows,' being left to fend for themselves after the deaths of their spouses. The rehabilitation of individuals affected by manual scavenging is not a one-time task but a long-term, continuous process that requires sustained effort and support.



**Ms. Sonam Mishra, Vice President, Sulabh International School of Action Sociology, New Delhi** highlighted significant issues and initiatives concerning rehabilitation and safety measures. She mentioned the availability of biocultures like MicroGem that have the ability to melt sewer silt, where we seek manual cleaning. Such biocultures can help melt the silt away for easier cleaning. For rehabilitation efforts, she discussed Sulabh International's collaboration with Nayi Disha Sanstha in Alwar, which has been providing skill development training in diverse fields such as beauty care, tailoring, and papad making since 2003. This initiative has successfully upskilled over 3,500 individuals, empowering them to



secure sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, she mentioned the provision of free education through schools up to the 10th grade, vocational centres and the facilitation of job opportunities for trained individuals. Ms. Mishra's insights underscored the importance of holistic approaches to community rehabilitation and skill enhancement.

**Mr. M. Krishna, Managing Director, Kam-Avida Enviro Engineers Pvt. Ltd., Pune** emphasized the ample availability of technology in India, highlighting that the primary challenge lies in the cumbersome municipal procurement process, which hampers the transition from manual to mechanized processes. He stressed that mechanization is essential to eliminate hazardous practices in certain situations. Referring to the 2013 Manual Scavengers Act, he pointed out its comprehensive guidelines on safety protocols but lamented the lack of enforcement. Despite extensive training programs by NSKFDC, awareness about the Act remains limited, even among senior officials. Mr. Krishna called for increased Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) efforts to ensure better compliance. He also highlighted NSKFDC's initiatives in funding mechanization and proposed sessions for dialogue and idea-sharing. Additionally, he advocated for recognizing the unique skills of those traditionally engaged in manual cleaning, proposing a transition to mechanized operations while preserving their livelihoods and dignity. He emphasized transforming the profession into a sustainable business model with respect and privacy.

**Ms. Raj Kumari, Director (policy and partnership), Solinas Integrity Pvt. Ltd., Tamil Nadu** expressed gratitude for the opportunity to present and highlight Solinas, a startup from IIT Madras addressing challenges in water and sanitation. She introduced innovative technologies like ENDOBOT, a robotic system for pipeline management, and Homeosep, an efficient sewer maintenance solution. These tools aim to combat manual scavenging, reduce water losses, and improve sanitation accessibility. She emphasized the resilience of the team, dedicating 70% of funds to R&D and iteratively enhancing solutions based on field learnings. Ms. Raj Kumari underscored the persistent issue of manual scavenging despite its ban and called for leveraging technology to eradicate it. Citing underutilization of mechanized systems by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), she recommended training, maintenance support, and incentivized usage to maximize impact. Additionally, she highlighted the success of the AMRUT Mitra initiative, empowering women-led SHGs in faecal sludge management, advocating for expanding their role in mechanized operations for sustainable livelihoods and social transformation.

**Ms. Utkarsha Kavadi, Senior Executive Director, All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai** highlighted the significance of local self-governance and underscored the necessity of adopting a convergent approach, particularly at state and local levels, to effectively localize the implementation of Environmental Resource Sustainability Units (ERSU). She emphasized the importance of developing comprehensive implementation guidelines and fostering an integrated approach that aligns various schemes and departmental objectives to achieve ERUSU goals. To enhance efficiency and accessibility, she proposed the establishment of state-level policy frameworks and single-window solutions to streamline processes. In addition, Ms. Kavadi stressed the need for robust



capacity-building initiatives aimed at local governing bodies, foundation workers, and professionals. She advocated for targeted training programs and the introduction of certification courses to professionalize sewer entry work and ensure social security connections for workers in the field. Furthermore, she highlighted the importance of developing specific guidelines for housing societies to construct and maintain decentralized sewage treatment plants (STPs). She pointed out that the current reliance on informal and untrained sectors has resulted in operational challenges, necessitating pilot projects and clear operational frameworks. The overarching focus of her recommendations was on creating localized action plans, reinforcing state and local institutional frameworks, and addressing existing gaps in capacity and implementation to foster sustainable and effective resource management practices.

The Hon'ble Chairperson concluded the open house discussion by emphasizing the need to move beyond merely identifying shortcomings and focusing on finding practical and sustainable solutions. While acknowledging that many participants had brought attention to various challenges during the discussion, the Chairperson underlined the importance of shifting the narrative towards actionable remedies. It was highlighted that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) can adopt a proactive approach in addressing the issues by leveraging its mandate and authority. This includes issuing targeted advisories to relevant stakeholders and providing comprehensive recommendations based on the solutions proposed during the deliberations. Such steps would ensure that the outcomes of the discussion translate into impactful measures, fostering tangible progress in resolving the concerns raised.

**Lt Col Virender Singh, Director, NHRC** delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to participants for their invaluable contributions. He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to uphold the dignity and rights of manual scavengers and acknowledged the resilience of affected communities.



## Actionable points :

### 1. Sanitation Worker's Safety and Well-being

- **Worker Registry:** State governments should compile detailed lists of manhole workers, including health details.
- **Tracking Manhole Deaths:** Maintain a record of manhole deaths and identify death-prone zones.
- **Contractor Oversight:** Regularly monitor contractors and penalize those directing workers to enter manholes.
- **Drainage System Improvement:** Convert open drains to underground systems or ensure proper covering.
- **Safety Equipment:** Provide sanitation workers with proper safety gear.
- **Housing Development:** Improve living conditions for sanitation workers, including access to essential services.
- **Emergency Helpline:** Create a dedicated helpline for sanitation workers in emergencies.
- **School Monitoring:** Prevent forced cleaning by children from Scheduled Caste communities in schools.
- **Hygiene Education:** Integrate hygiene education in school curriculums.

- **Innovative Toilets:** Promote the adoption of water-saving toilets like Eco-Soc and Chemi San toilets.

## 2. Deaths in Septic and Sewer Tanks

- **NHRC Task Force:** Set up a task force to follow up on judicial cases regarding septic and sewer tank deaths.
- **Monitor Vigilance Committees:** Hold regular public hearings to assess vigilance committees' performance.
- **Data on Technology Usage:** Compile data on the use and costs of robotic and suction technology in sewer cleaning.

## 3. Complete Ban on Manual Scavenging

- **Independent Survey Review:** Ensure future surveys on manual scavengers are independently reviewed for accuracy.
- **Evaluate 2013 Act:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the effectiveness of the 2013 Act prohibiting manual scavenging.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission Campaign:** Launch a media campaign to raise awareness about manual scavenging.
- **NAMASTE Scheme Evaluation:** Address gaps in the NAMASTE scheme, ensuring workers receive fair wages and support.
- **No Human Entry in Sewer/Septic tanks.**

## 4. Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers

- **Gender-Sensitive Rehabilitation:** Focus on supporting "sewer widows" and provide financial, legal, and educational support.
- **Prevention of Child Labor:** Ensure children of manual scavengers are not pushed into this profession.

## 5. Promotion of Innovation and Technological Solutions

- **Bandicoot Technology:** Encourage the use of Bandicoot robots for sewer cleaning in urban as well as Rural areas
- **Funding for Innovation:** Create funds for startups addressing manual scavenging solutions.
- **Simplified Procurement for Government:** Streamline procurement processes for innovative solutions to eliminate manual scavenging.
- **Budget Allocation for Mechanization:** Ensure sufficient funds for mechanization under Swachh Bharat Mission and other related schemes.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Encourage CSR funds to be

directed towards manual scavenging solutions and worker rehabilitation.

- **Mandatory Manhole Cleaning with Technology:** Ensure the implementation of preventive manhole cleaning using advanced technologies.
- **Scalable Technology Implementation:** Enable the scaling of successful technologies without the need for new tenders.

## 6. Further Recommendations

- **Expand Bioculture Use:** Promote the use of biocultures like MicroGem for sludge management in sewers.
- **Enhancing data collection, enforcing regulations more effectively, and ensuring that sanitation workers have access to health and social security benefits, with a particular focus on rural areas**
- **Mechanization Incentives:** Provide funding to startups and solutions that focus on sanitation mechanization.
- **Free PPE and Safety Training:** Offer free PPE and operational safety training for sanitation workers.
- **Stricter Regulations:** Enforce stricter entry protocols for hazardous spaces, supported by ERSUs.(Environmental Resource Sustainability Units)
- **Health Cards & Social Security:** Provide sanitation workers with health cards, scholarships, and social security.
- **Gender-Neutral Safety:** Implement gender-neutral safety measures for women in manual scavenging.
- **Skill Enhancement Partnerships:** Collaborate with organizations like UNICEF for skill-building initiatives.
- **Decentralized STPs (Sewage Treatment Plant) Guidelines:** Develop guidelines for decentralized sewage treatment plant construction and maintenance.
- **Housing & Social Amenities:** Ensure proper housing facilities and social amenities for sanitation workers.
- **Regulate Desludging Market:** Regulate and empanel registered operators for desludging services.
- **Survey should be conducted in such areas where manual scavengers are found**
- **There should be proper data about the pre matric education given to manual scavengers because it is not provided at the ground level**



- **Top priority in sewage and septic tank deaths are Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, Delhi followed by Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and West Bengal where deaths reported are more. Therefore, steps should be taken in prevention of their deaths.**

### **List of Participants:**

#### **NHRC Participants:**

1. Hon'ble Chairperson Shri. Justice V. Ramasubramanian, NHRC
2. Hon'ble Member Smt. Vijaya Bharati Sayani, NHRC
3. Hon'ble Member Justice Dr. Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi.
4. Secretary General, Shri Bharat Lal,
5. Director General Shri R.P Meena
6. Registrar (Law) Shri Joginder Singh
7. Joint Secretary, Shri Devendra Kumar Nim
8. Lt Col Virender Singh, Director, NHRC
8. Dr. Kanaklata Yadav, (Consultant, Research)
9. Ms. Manisha Majumdar (JRC )
10. Ms. Avani Verma (JRC)
11. Mr. Abhishek Kumar Sharma (JRC)
12. Ms. Radhika Goel (RA)
13. Ms Niharika Sharma (JRC)
14. Ms. Sharna Chakroborty (JRC)

#### **Speakers :**

##### **1. Sh. Prabhat Kumar Singh**

Managing Director

National Safai Karamcharis Finance & Development Corporation

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##### **2. Mr. Rohit Kakkar**

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##### **3. Mr. Sujoy Mojumdar**

Senior WASH specialist  
UNICEF, India

**4. Mr. Yusuf Kabir**

Water Sanitation and Hygiene Specialist  
UNICEF, India

**5. Ms. Utkarsha Kavadi**

Senior Executive Director  
All India Institute of Local Self Government, Mumbai

**6. Mr. Bezwada Wilson**

National Convenor  
Safai Karamchari Andolan, New Delhi

**7. Dr. Vimal Kumar**

Founder  
The Movement for Scavenger Community  
Mumbai

**8. Prof. Sheeva Dubey**

Assistant Professor, Media and Journalism  
FLAME University, Pune.

**9. Ms. Manjula Pradeep**

Founder and Chairperson  
WAVYE Foundation  
Ahmedabad

**10. Ms. Meghna Malhotra**

Deputy Director  
Urban Management Centre, Ahmedabad

**11. Dr. Vinod Kumar**

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**12. Ms. Sonam Mishra**

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**13. Mr. Rashid Karimbanakkal**

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Genrobotics Innovations  
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**14. Mr. M. Krishna**  
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Kam-Avida Enviro Engineers Pvt. Ltd.  
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**15. Ms Raj Kumari**  
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**16. Ms. Smriti Pandey**  
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**17. Ms. Baishali Lahiri**  
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**18. Smt. Chandrakala**  
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Karnataka State Safai Karmachari Development Corporation

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