

October 20, 2011

Greetings from Garima Abhiyan/Jan Sahas!!

Inhuman practice of manual scavenging is unabated till today despite having 18 year old law to prohibit it which is no longer effective. Rastriya Garima Abhiyan has demanded a new law to curb this practice effectively. The campaign has been striving for last one decade to abolish manual scavenging in various states of India.

It may be noted that by people involved in manual scavenging and liberated from scavenging and their organizations has been constantly raising the voice against this inhuman practice. As the effect of it, the Union government started the process of amending the existing law after get recommended by the NAC in October 2010. Thus, a draft amendment bill was prepared by the Ministry of Housing and urban poverty alleviation in consultation with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Urban Development and civil society organizations including Garima Abhiyan.

There are many reasons to our believe that amendment in the existing Act of 1993 will not bear any result since the Employment of Manual Scavengers and *Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993* is largely based on sanitation and it has been implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation. But, the whole issue is related to human dignity and social justice. Thus, a new legislation is required which has to be based on human dignity and social justice. Demanding a new legislation on abolishing manual scavenging, delegations of liberated women and activist from various states of India and associated with campaign met 64 parliamentarians and handed over the draft bill and recommendations.

They demanded from the Government of India that a new law is required to bring under Act 248 of the Indian Constitution to be implemented all over the Country by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Campaign emphasized that the Act of 1993 didn't spell any rehabilitation measures for those who works as manual scavenger and for those who liberated from manual scavenging.

However, few measures have been taken by the government since 1993 for economic relief, but yet not implemented in true spirit. The major reason behind such schemes was not part of the Act which failed to liberate and rehabilitate peoples from such inhuman practice. Therefore, a new Act is must to include all aspects of rehabilitation including alternative employment, education, social security, housing and social justice.

Here you find the proposed draft bill:

<http://www.dalits.nl/pdf/DraftProposedBillOnManualScavenging.pdf>.

Thanks,

In solidarity,

Ashif and Lali Bai
on behalf of Garima Abhiyan

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