

MANUAL SCAVENGING -- STARK REALITY OF CONTEMPORARY INDIA: A STUDY OF SITAPUR (UP)

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ABSTRACT

Manual scavenging is a stark reality of contemporary India. The aim of the study was to understand the socio-economic status of scavengers residing in Sitapur District (UP). The study includes men and women who are or have done manual scavenging at some point in their lifetime. As the first act of deconstruction of dry latrines came 22 years ago in 1993, it was imperative to understand the transition from dry latrines to sanitary, the lives and day to day struggles of manual scavengers and also the continuation of caste-based occupation in form of sanitary toilets. The study was quantitative in nature with a descriptive design and a sample size of 60 men and women. A primary method of data collection was adopted following the semi-structured interview schedule. Literacy level among the manual scavengers is found to be minimal. 57 percent were illiterate and are unable to take primary level education due to poverty and simultaneously drop out of school. 48 percent of respondents are unable to afford to school for their children. 93 percent of the respondents have no other source of income whereas 87 percent deny the feasibility of other alternative occupation due to the existence of untouchability.

KEYWORDS: *Dalit, Caste, Manual Scavenging, Untouchability, Dry Toilets*