

2.30 *Daliya Jalao*: Liberating and rehabilitating manual scavengers in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh

The *Daliya Jalao* (literally meaning ‘burn the basket’) initiative sought to eliminate manual scavenging in Badaun district, Uttar Pradesh, through a mission mode approach, generating a high impact within a short period of time. Under the initiative 2,750 manual scavengers were liberated within a year and the initiative has had a profound impact on health indices with no fresh cases of polio reported since 2010. The initiative also took proactive steps to rehabilitate manual scavengers through existing government schemes such as pension schemes, special scholarships for children, rural housing schemes, loans and skill upgradation training. It has sustained itself on the willingness of the community of manual scavengers to organise themselves and eliminate manual scavenging.

Rationale

The continuing practice of manual scavenging that involves cleaning of dry toilets and carrying/transporting the night-soil as head-load, primarily by women of certain Dalit communities, has remained a blot on India’s development story. This practice has continued despite promulgation of prohibitive legislations and court rulings such as the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, which was followed by a Supreme Court ruling in 2003 (Public Interest Litigation Writ Petition (Civil) No. 583/2003 – Safai Karamchari Andolan and 14 other organisations vs. Union of India and others).

The tradition of manual scavenging seems far from over if we look at the figures of Census 2011 as there are around 7,50,000 families in India that still work as manual scavengers. The inability to curb this dehumanizing practice led to the passing of a more stringent law – The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenger and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. This Act

is more comprehensive as it prohibits employment as manual scavenger by prescribing stringent punishment, including imprisonment up to five years, and provides for rehabilitation of manual scavengers and their families.

According to a survey report of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the latest figures of total manual scavengers and their dependents are 7,70,338 of which 3,42,468 are still to receive any kind of assistance for their rehabilitation. In this context, an initiative that has converted almost 80,000 dry latrines into pour flush latrines and successfully freed 2,750 manual scavengers and their families for rehabilitation is significant.

The *Daliya Jalao* initiative was a result of the combined efforts of the District Magistrate and the district administration of Badaun, with the support of the local community, to permanently mitigate the menace of dry toilets, practice of manual scavenging and unhygienic lifestyles in July 2010. It emerged because issues of hygiene and health had been brought to the foreground



Image 1: Prevalence of manual scavenging in Badaun, 2010

Source: District Administration Badaun, 2014

in 2009, highlighting the district’s Infant Mortality Rate of 110 (highest in the state) and the frequent outbreaks of epidemics such as diarrhoea, dysentery, intestinal worms and typhoid. In 2009, the district also reported highest cases of wild polio viruses in India, leading to World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) declaring 16 out of 18 blocks of Badaun district as high risk blocks for polio. Efforts to identify the causes of this menace pointed to existence of dry toilets in alarmingly high numbers. The introspection within the district administration down to the village level led to the genesis of the *Daliya Jalao* initiative.

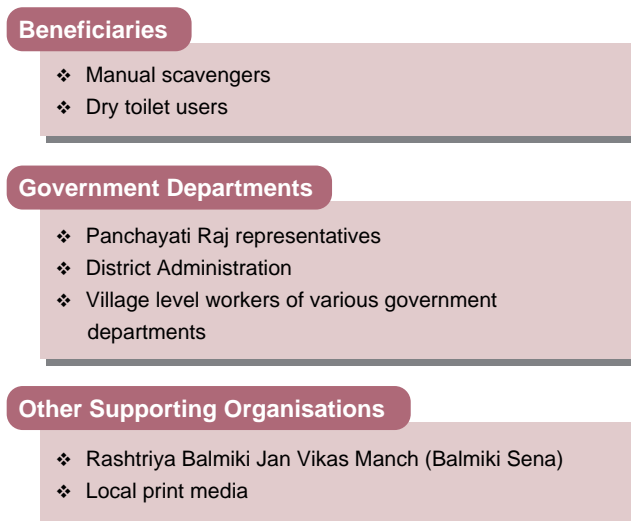
Objectives

The main objective of *Daliya Jalao* was to liberate manual scavengers from their degrading work of scavenging and their family members from the age-old stigma and discrimination. The programme also aims at rehabilitating them economically, socially and psychologically. It is also engaged in the task of converting all the dry toilets into pour flush toilets and achieve better sanitation, leading to the improved health indices in the district.

Key Stakeholders

The implementation of the programme is being led by local Panchayati Raj representatives, the District Magistrate and village level workers from various government departments with the support of the Rashtriya Balmiki Jan Vikas Manch and local print media. The beneficiaries involved in the programme are manual scavengers and dry toilet users.

Figure 1: Key stakeholders



Implementation Strategy

This initiative was a result of the efforts of a proactive district administration trying to grapple with the issues of health. Since any progress on the health indices requires a focus on sanitation involving elimination of the traditional system of dry latrines, the situation called for convergence of efforts to address factors reinforcing manual scavenging. Addressing the issue of manual scavenging is complex, as it necessarily involves addressing issues of caste and gender, health and occupation, human dignity and freedom, and human rights and social justice.

In July 2010, after consensus within the district administration, a multi-pronged implementation strategy was devised to encourage home owners to convert dry toilets into pour flush toilets. Steps were also taken to encourage manual scavengers to give up cleaning of dry toilets. The idea was to target the demand and supply for manual scavenging, so that the cyclic pattern of reinforcement was destroyed. Since the entire district administration needed to be sensitised before any action on ground could be taken, rounds of meetings and trainings were organised. These meetings involved district, tehsil, block and village level workers from health, education and social welfare among other departments in the district.

Joint meetings were held amongst all the district level officials and nodal officers to coordinate work in the chosen blocks. These officials, in turn, trained the block and village level workers so that a comprehensive team was built to carry out the actual implementation.

The effectiveness of this exercise can be gauged from the fact that within a span of three months, around 566 manual scavenging families were liberated from this work and rehabilitated, and around 14,000 dry latrines were converted into pour flush ones and 51 villages that were chosen in the first phase of the initiative achieved total sanitation status.



Image 2: A manual scavenger in Badaun

Source: District Administration, Badaun

a. Awareness generation

The targeted behaviour change required intense engagement with the community and a well-planned Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaign. A multi-pronged approach was devised for the purpose. The government functionaries at various levels were inspired to become role models by converting dry latrines in their own homes into pour flush ones. During the campaign, approximately 7,000 government functionaries converted their toilets from dry into pour flush ones. The engagement with the community was intense – beginning with sanitation campaigns which explained the ill effects of unhygienic disposal of human faeces on health, awareness was also generated through health camps, rallies, cleaning drives and wall writings.

As many as 500 village meetings were conducted by the District Magistrate and other government officials to underscore the link between health, hygiene and sanitation.

b. Liberation and rehabilitation of the Balmiki community

Simultaneously, efforts were made to rope in the energies of the leaders within the Balmiki community that was primarily engaged in cleaning dry toilets in Badaun, to motivate their members to give up the practice. Awareness of the community was generated through IEC campaigns, especially through the poster making event called *Naya Savera*, meaning new dawn, signifying a new beginning of hope. To motivate them, trainings in masonry were also organised so that they could be the agents for their own upliftment by dismantling the dry latrines and constructing the pour-flush ones instead. This also built their skills, giving

Figure 2: Team formation for leading *Daliya Jalao* initiative

DM leads team along with Chief Development Officer, all Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Block Development Officer

- ❖ All line Department heads are a part of this leading team

BDOs as team leaders of their respective blocks

- ❖ Supported by Block level officers from all line departments in the block

Gram Pradhan and village secretary as team leaders

- ❖ Supported by village level functionaries of line departments, manual scavengers community, Influential members of society

Source: District Administration, Badaun



Image 3: Awareness generation in villages

Source: District Administration, Badaun

them the confidence to give up their hereditary profession for another means of livelihood. People and families giving up the traditional occupation of manual scavenging were also prioritised for receiving various government scheme benefits such as those accruing from below poverty line and Antodaya Cards, pension schemes, scholarships, loans, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) job cards etc. Efforts were made to create avenues to sustainably assimilate the community in the mainstream and end the years of discrimination that they had faced.

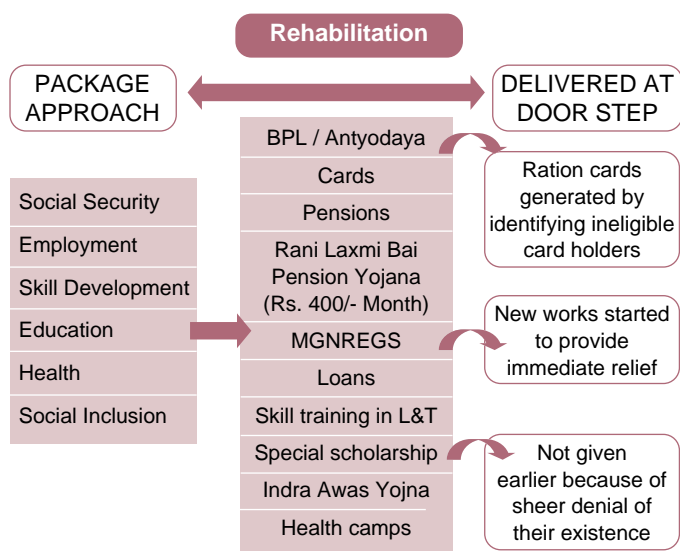
Most rehabilitation schemes were also aimed at ensuring that discrimination is checked. Most significantly, children from the Balmiki community were enrolled in schools with a special scholarship of Rs. 1,850, and were served mid-day meals alongside other children. A scheme providing loans for buffaloes to the community ensured that the milk produced gets access into the market through government dairies. Similarly, working alongside other MGNREGS workers placed the Balmikis on the same platform as any other community.

Hence, rehabilitation was not only about providing livelihood or just income generating opportunities, but it also had social rehabilitative features. In a symbolic manifestation of liberation from scavenging, a celebration was organised in villages by collective burning of the *daliyas* or the woven baskets that were used to carry night soil; hence the nomenclature, *Daliya Jalao*.

c. Trainings provided at the district level

District teams comprising heads of various departments were introduced to the intensity of the problem of manual scavenging and its negative impacts. At the village level, recognition of the issue as a problem was difficult due to high acceptance of the practice, but this was critical to the success of the initiative. After the

Figure 3: Rehabilitation scheme



Source: District Administration, Badaun

initial sensitisation of district level officers of various departments, a follow up was done through series of educational and motivational trainings by the District Magistrate along with medical doctors and senior officials from the district. In the implementation phase, review meetings and discussions were used as on the job training and motivation. IEC strategies for sensitisation, and completion of conversion from dry latrines to flush latrines on a mission mode became the prime modus operandi.

d. Monitoring and review

The district administration ensured that daily reports of the progress made were reported through email or telephone. Regular meetings were also conducted with the district and block level officials to review progress periodically and meet the challenges that arose during implementation. Extensive visits to the sites of implementation, meetings with people’s representatives and media operated as a mechanism to obtain people’s feedback on the initiative.

Resources Utilised

There were no earmarked funds for this particular initiative. The funds of Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) were used for IEC activities and also as subsidy to those who converted their dry toilets to pour flush ones. The scheme utilised the district’s planned budget for the campaign. In doing so, it converged activities of the various government departments for concerted action towards achieving total sanitation and better health.

Impact

Conversion of dry toilets into pour flush toilets: The initiative was implemented in a mission mode that generated a high impact within a short period of time. Within a year from the start of implementation, 50,000 dry toilets in 535 villages were converted into pour-flush ones. Another 20,000 dry toilets in the urban households of the district were also converted by July 2011.

Liberation of manual scavengers: The initiative liberated 2,750 manual scavengers in Badaun from dehumanising work by July 2011. The main reason behind this achievement was that community leaders took upon themselves the task of convincing manual scavengers to give up scavenging and a collective decision was taken by the community to this effect.

Improvement in health: The initiative has had a profound impact on the health indices, evidenced mainly by the fact that there was no fresh case of polio since 2010 in contrast to 52 wild polio-virus cases reported during the previous year, 2009. The numbers of sick children recorded in pulse polio rounds also came down from 155 cases in April 2010 to 95 in May 2011. There was also a steady decline in the incidence of diarrhoea as the number of cases decreased from 18,216 in 2009-10 to 12,675 in 2010-11.

People speak...

Kalicharan Balmiki, Badaun, leader of the community



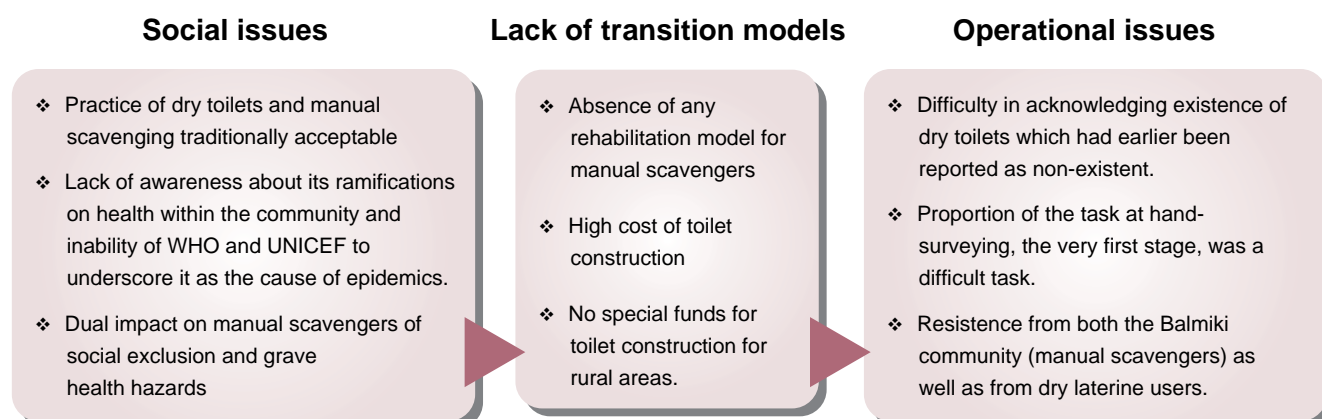
“The change of profession helped us in freeing ourselves from (social) discrimination, (physical) illness and malnutrition aspects. But we still suffer from economic hardships as the rehabilitation could not fully cover the loss of income that we suffered. But our future generations are saved from the despised work we were forced to do for generations.”

Bittan, Sheikhpur village, Badaun



“We used to work because of the traditional constraints. We could not say no to this despicable work. People from the village would force us to do this work. Now, we shall never pick up the daliya again.”

Figure 4: Key challenges in Badaun



Source: OneWorld Foundation India, 2014

Key Challenges

Manual scavenging was a traditionally accepted practice and any attempt to eliminate it was a very challenging task. It presented multifarious challenges in terms of social acceptance and inclusion, financial implications in rehabilitation as well as implementation of the initiative and functional difficulties in implementing this initiative in mission mode. The details of these challenges have been elaborated in *Figure 4*.

Replicability and Sustainability

The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavenger and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, prohibits employment as manual scavengers, and makes it mandatory for the district administration to ensure that the law is enforced. *Daliya Jalao* presents a workable and effective strategy for implementing this Act. Hence, this strategy will remain critical until manual scavenging and dry toilets exist. It is highly replicable as after its success in Badaun, it has been replicated in 15 other districts in western Uttar Pradesh, home to the culture of dry toilets and manual scavenging. The most critical factors while implementing

this strategy are community taking ownership of the project and comprehensive rehabilitation plan for the manual scavenging community, covering not just financial, but also social rehabilitation.

Conclusion

The 2011 Census threw up shocking data that demonstrated the limitations of earlier endeavours in eradicating manual scavenging. The strategy of *Daliya Jalao* placed the onus of action on the district administration of Badaun, making the task attainable by allowing contextual flexibility. The participatory approach and IEC campaigns ensured that all sections of society realised they have an equal stake in ending this practice as they all benefited from it, and this contributes to the sustainability of the initiative.

This comprehensive approach that involves, health, education and sanitation, leads to an overall impact that goes much beyond sanitation. The sustained impact of this initiative that was started in 2010, till the time of this documentation in 2014, is evidence that effective participatory strategies can ensure mitigation of the historically dehumanising practice of manual scavenging.

Fact Sheet

Theme	Social Security
Nodal Implementing Agency	District Administration, Badaun district
Geographical Coverage	Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh State
Target Groups	Manual scavengers and dry toilet users
Years of Implementation	2010-2012 (Rehabilitation component is ongoing)



The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2007
Government of India
Ministry of Tribal Affairs

ANNEXURE I
TITLE FOR FOREST LAND UNDER OCCUPATION

1. Name(s) of holder(s) of forest right (including spouse) :- Sri Ram Prasad Mahanta
Smt Ranika Mahanta

2. Name of the father: :- Sri Kanti Mahanta

3. Name of the Applicant :-
1. Sri Ranika Mahanta (W)
2. Sri Pradyumna Mahanta (H)
3. Sri Jayanta Mahanta (H)
4. Sri Ananta Sri Mahanta (H)
5. Sri Jyotindra Mahanta (H)
6. Sri Laxmi Mahanta (H)

4. Address :-
Khamling Bari

5. Village / Gram Panchayat :- Khamling Bari

6. Gram Panchayat :- Khamling Bari A.P. Village

7. Taluk / Taluka :- Mairakhi

8. District :- West Tripura

9. Whether Intimated Title or Other Traditional Forest Dweller :- Subordinate title

10. Area :- 04.00 acre

11. Description of boundaries by government boundaries including khata / map/reference No. / Khata No. / P.T. No. / D.P.

This title is hereditary, but was alienated or encroached under sub-section (c) of section 2 of the Act.

By, the undersigned authority, for and on behalf of the Government of Tripura

1. Name of the State / Territory office, name and signature to validate the above forest right.

Director, Forest Department
Government of Tripura
West Tripura

Director, Forest Department
Government of Tripura
West Tripura

Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Government of India
New Delhi, India

A beneficiary of the Tripura government's initiative on 'Forest Rights Act, 2006: Distributing land deeds to tribal people in Tripura' displays his patta document.