

## To Study On Review of Literature Related to Scavengers

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**Abstract:** The available literature on the Schedule Caste in general and scavengers in particular in India reflects the subhuman conditions of the scavengers' community. They are mainly- Trivedi Harshand R. (1976), Shyam Lal (1981, 1984, 1992, 1995 and 1996), J. Sarkar (1984), Takashi Shinoda (1991), Bindeshwar Pathak (1991, 1997), Mukherjee et.al. (1993), Rama Sharma (1995), Akbar Hussain and M.G. Husain (1998), Ramesh Chandra (1999), P S Vivek (2000), Jayshree Mishra (2000), Sachidananda (2001, 2004), T.K. Oommen (2004), Deepak V. Karbhari (2004), Sosamma Pothen (2004), Ram Gopal Singh (2004), B.K. Nagla (2004), H.M. Kothari (2004), R.D. Gadkar (2004), S.N. Chaudhary and Pratima Choudhary (2004), Paul D' Souza (2004), Tripathy, S. (2004), Gita Ramaswamy (2006), T. M. Dak (2007), Rajeev Kumar Singh and Ziyauddin (2009), etc.  
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### Introduction

R.D. Gadkar (2004) briefly attempts to discuss the status of human rights globally with a major focus on India covering the most disadvantaged groups like the SCs in general and scavengers in particular, in his paper, namely- "Human Rights and Rehabilitation of Scavengers". In this paper, he evaluated the National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation which was launched in 1992 and revised again in 1996 especially for the scavengers of Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. The study showed that the rehabilitation programme though has made a positive impact on the scavengers; progress in rehabilitation is very slow. As far as Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh are concerned, Karnataka is far better in rehabilitation programme compared to training programme, whereas Madhya Pradesh is very good in providing training but has performed poorly in rehabilitation. However, there is similarity among the scavengers of both the states so far their attitudes and values are concerned regarding their standard of living.

S.N. Chaudhary and Pratima Choudhary (2004) presented a paper on occupational mobility on the basis of empirical study which is conducted in the city of Bhopal, named "Social Change among Occupationally Mobile Scavengers". It is found in the study that about 20% scavengers are still in caste occupation and mobility from caste occupation took place in father's time or in respondent's time itself. Interestingly, fathers of 8 % of the respondents had changed the occupation and 92% of respondents have themselves moved from caste to non-caste occupation. It is also found that only the male members of the family have moved from the caste

occupation and females are still in the caste occupation. They don't want to leave their municipal job as it ensures them job security and other benefits. They concluded that there is significant change in their socio-economic life of scavengers due to various options availed for them. Under the present anti-poor forces of globalization, they suggest that the education should be perceived as the most important vehicle of social transformation among them.

Paul D' Souza (2004) is persuasively revealing in his presentation, "Scavenging towards Freedom – Dynamics of Power Paradox among Bhangi of Gujrat" in which he observes the trends of the oppressive ideology as well as the possibility of political mobilization and self assertion. Scavenging has remained a caste-based occupation that has caused perpetual exclusion of the scavengers from socio-political and cultural domains of society. This process of marginalization of scavengers is a human rights issue. After analyzing the three instance of rebellion, namely- the strikes of Ahmedabad of 1911 and 1946, and the Viramgram strike for self-dignity; the author came at the conclusion that the scavengers of Gujarat have never know the aggressive ideology of Ambedkar and influenced the Gandhian ideology.

### Review of the related literature:

These studies, particularly Trivedi Harshand R. (1976) elaborated in his study "Scheduled Caste Women: A Study In Exploitation" that the occupation of scavenging has been traditionally associated with female members even in rural areas. In brief, in the states of Gujrat,

Andhra Pradesh and Mysore, there are about 30% to 40% of female engaged in scavenging. On the other hand, the percentage of females engaged in this occupation in rural areas in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Orissa, Mysore and Madhya Pradesh comes to about 45% to 65% as compared with males. Shyam Lal (1981) conducted a study on "Caste and Political Mobilization- the Bhangis" in Rajasthan (Jodhpur). He tried to conclude on the basis of documentary survey, growth of caste association, structure and procedures, leadership and relationship with political parties and government. He found that these people awaked themselves regarding educational, economic and political opportunities.

Jayant Sarkar (1984) conducted a study on "Sweeping/ Scavenging: Occupation of an immigrant of Shillong Town". Sweeping/ scavenging and allied occupations in different cities and towns of India are pursued by some particular castes of the respective areas. These castes have been categorized as Scheduled Castes of that area. Some tribes also have taken up this occupation in Hilly areas/towns of North India. In Churachandpur, the town committee (functioning as municipality) has recruited for the first time only two sweepers and both of them belong to the Kabui Naga tribe. In Silchar town of the Cachar district, the sweepers are mostly Nagas. In the towns of Aijol, Mizoram, the Mizos are the only group who work as sweepers. For this, the author collected information from 168 sweepers (153 Sikhs & 15 Hindus), to get a picture of the nature of immigration and the nature of monopolising the occupation, who employed in Shillong Municipality and Shillong Cantonment Board. The entire sweepers live in three colonies, i.e. 1) Gora line colony; 2) Bara Bazar sweeper colony and 3) the quarters of cantonment board. The data shows that 162 sweepers came from two districts of Punjab, namely- Amritsar (99) and Gurdaspur (63) and 6 persons from Motihari district of West Bihar. The author has made an attempt to draw an outline of immigrational pattern, economic condition, religious organisation and political activities of the sweepers of Shillong. Lastly, it is observed in the study that sweeping occupation has been monopolised by Punjabi-speaking people, especially Sikhs, originally belonged to landless Mazhbi group. As in Shillong there is no such tough competition for getting in sweeper's job.

Shyam Lal (1984) conducted a study, "The Bhangis in Transition" in Rajasthan. His study shows that to some extent, the Bhangi Caste, which has been performing night soil work, has given up this job in Jodhpur. There are some evidences of changes from traditional to non-traditional occupations among the Bhangis. Reservation of seats in government services, emergence of education, the aspiration for getting high social status in one's own society, growth of the city,

political awareness and leadership of late Shri Ram Sarvate are some of the main reasons for shifting the occupations. Takashi Shinoda (1991) gives a vivid picture of the status and socio-economic conditions of scavengers in India under title "A Study on the Status of Sweepers in India". It is found in the study that high concentration of the Bhanghi workers in the sweeping work. The occupational structure of male workers is slightly more diversified than that of female workers. However, the extent of the occupational immobility of the Bhanghi is not confined to the present generation. There has not been any visible improvement in the occupational mobility of the Bhanghis as a whole over the three generations. It has been observed in study that the scavengers prefer to take loans from private sources.

Bindeshwar Pathak (1991) pointed out in his study, named- "Road to Freedom" that the scavengers were placed at the lowest rung of the caste ladder. The nature of work traditionally associated with them or imposed upon them to the lowest stratum of the social hierarchy of exterior castes. The task of cleaning night soil was the most inferior job because this involved the touching of human excreta by the scavengers. Consequently, they didn't get social justice and human treatment. Being poor and socially backward, they could neither revolt against the unjust sanctions nor could get rid of scavenging works. In spite of their common deprivation and disabilities, the scheduled caste did not constitute ritually homogenous category from a ritual hierarchy.

Shyam Lal (1992) elaborated his essay, namely- "De-Sanskritization of Upper Castes into Bhangis". The study analyses the downward mobility of a population in Rajasthan. The De-Sanskritization of upper castes into Bhangi Caste is the focus of this study. The author examined to the factors motivating De-sanskritization from higher castes to lower castes. The reasons for their conversion are as- their religious background, their employment and so on. This paper is largely based on personal interviews with 16 informants of the Bhangi Caste. The term conversion of the upper caste has been used here and elsewhere in this paper in the sense of self conversion and not in the sense of forceful conversion. Mukherjee et.al. (1993) in their study "Scavengers in India: a report" explains the socio-economic background of scavengers. It revealed that scavengers are mostly Hindus and Scheduled Castes and scavenging is mostly a female dominated occupation. It is also found that they are comparatively of young age and their educational level is low or mostly illiterate or upto primary level. The family structure of scavengers is mainly nuclear.

Rama Sharma (1995) conducted a study about the Bhangi of Delhi under title "Occupational Mobility- Change and Continuity." About 300

families were interviewed to examine the shifting away from traditional occupation of sweeping & scavenging. The occupations are categorized into two categories, i.e. 1. Skilled manual work, small business and supervisory work have been placed in first category and professions of sweeping & scavenging have been placed in the second category, i.e. unskilled manual work. In the study, 300 respondents were interviewed by using stratified sampling method. It is found in the study that 69.3% respondents engaged in the unskilled manual labour.

Shyam Lal (1995) conducted a study under title, “Acquiring a Dalit Identity: Downward Mobility of Some Upper Castes of Rajasthan”. He studied the phenomenon of the high caste who converted themselves into the Bhangi Caste. He investigated the originality of Bhangis and found that they originally came from Brahmin, Thakur, Rajputs, Punjabi Khatri, Jat Sikh, Nais etc. He also highlighted that this types of conversion is not confined only to Rajasthan but also may be observed in other states too. Shyam Lal (1996) presented an essay, named “Social Mobility among India’s Bhanghis” that is based on casual interview and speeches/statements of a few leaders who were present at Noval Ashram in Mokha Bhangi Basti Jodhpur. His main objective is to point out the certain trends that take place in the process of upward mobility among the Bhangis. He found that education was regarded as an important avenue of upward mobility.

Bindehwar Pathak (1997) presents a broad overview of the plight of the scavengers, in his paper, namely- “Liberation of Scavengers from Social and Occupational Bondage”. He traced the origin of scavengers with their social exclusion, degradation, discriminations and disabilities. He feels that the liberation of scavengers from social bondage, hereditary occupational tie-up, educational backwardness, poverty and penury had regrettably not figured as prominently as it should have been with the present policies and programmes of development and social justice. Having reviewed the governmental policies and programmes for the liberation of scavengers, he has dilated upon the seminal contribution of Sulabh International Social Service Organization in paving a road to their freedom and human dignity. Sulabh technology of low-cost sanitation has provided a viable solution to the emancipation of scavengers from the demeaning task of manual handling of human excreta, and thereby, relieving the scavengers from their hereditary occupation. Besides, Sulabh has also successfully undertaken the programmes for the training, rehabilitation, education and social upgradation of scavengers.

Akbar Hussain and M.G. Husain (1998) conducted a study to assess the psychological as well as social well-beings of 200 Scavengers (100 Muslims & 100 Hindus; 100 Males & 100 Females)

in different localities of Patna, under title, “Psycho-Social Well-being of Scavengers”. The study illustrated that Muslim scavengers were little superior than Hindus with regard to their psychological development while in the case of social well-being or development, Hindu group had a little dominance over Muslim scavengers. Again, it is found that the males groups had edge over the female scavengers on both measurements of development (social and psychological). In sum up, the study concluded that scavengers in general were not found to be as much socially developed as they were psychologically. Their level of psychological satisfaction or well-being was higher than that of social satisfaction. It indicates that scavengers were neither mentally dissatisfied with their occupation nor they perceive their occupation as much derogatory as other people think. But it is society which create problem for them. It is generally observed that society not only had negative feeling towards the scavengers rather it perceives them as untouchables and subhuman. Because of this feeling scavengers perceive themselves as alienated and disregarded section of society that leads to sense of dissatisfaction in their social life. Therefore, scavengers were not as much psychologically unhealthy as they were socially deprived and rejected.

Ramesh Chandra (1999) examined a national scheme to eliminate scavenging in his article “Rehabilitation of Scavengers”. He found that the process of liberation of scavengers involves not only value conflict, rehabilitation and change in the means of livelihood; it is also closely related to the change in social status and pattern of social relationship.

P S Vivek (2000)’s presented a paper on scavengers, entitled, ‘Scavengers: Mumbai’s Neglected Workers’. The researcher prefers the term ‘safai kamgar’ than ‘scavenger’ by arguing that it is a neutral term. In Mumbai there are safai kamgars originating from various parts of India like, Maharashtrians, Gujaratis, Haryanvis, Upiites, Punjabis, Tamilians and others. They are employed in Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai and organizations, like the railways, airports, state government establishments, big companies and private offices and also the informal sector. Their wages and increments are not fixed. They have neither security of employment, nor any help at times of illness, incapacity due to accident or retirement. Most safai kamgars do not benefit from the general laws governing employment – for example, the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947; the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The researcher identifies six factors which adversely affect the present condition and future prospects of safai kamgars in Mumbai: psychological (harassment); economic (exploitation); political (domination);

social (oppression); religious (subjugation); and cultural (suppression).

Jayshree Mishra (2000) conducted a study, namely “The girl-child in a scavenging community”. Her study was based on to assess nature of prejudice between male and female child in a scavenging community in Sambalpur district of Orissa. The study showed that male / son is considered both socially and religiously necessary to ensure salvation for the father via funeral rites and the support of parents in their old age. Sachchidananda (2001)’s work “People at the Bottom: A Portrait of the Scavengers” is based on an empirical study covering 2500 households in urban and rural settings in Bihar. It is intended to give a glimpse of the living and working conditions of the scavenger castes and to bring out the impact of different welfare programmes for their liberation and rehabilitation in the gender and human rights perspectives. Efforts to bring the scavengers from the margin to mainstream of Indian society and ultimately to empower them.

T.K. Oommen (2004) highlights that inequality, discrimination, exclusion and stigmatization conjointly contribute to the utter marginalization of scavenger in India, in his paper, “Restoration of Human Rights and Dignity to Dalits”. Initiating the debate on the theme, he theories that the Dalits were never given any human rights or treated with dignity, hence cannot be restored to them as such. He presents three arguments that are gained currency among the academia to a critical analysis- that the scavengers were Buddhists in the past, that they were of upper caste origin and that they were captured as war prisoner and forced to become scavengers. According to him, Scavenging is a by-product of caste system whereas in the words of Ambedkar, it is a system of occupational division of labourers- a system of inseparably linked to Hinduism. He observed that denying almost half of the humanity sanitation facilities, while indulging in reckless military expenditure is nothing but a perverse priority, a very denial of human dignity. The author advocated the measures to bestow dignity as to develop a rational attitude towards disposing of human excreta, reject the ideological justification of caste system and devise and deploy an appropriate sanitation technology.

Deepak V. Karbhari (2004) conducted an empirical study, namely, “Rehabilitation of Scavengers: training input and occupational change”. He assessed whether rehabilitation of scavengers is taking place in a proper way, especially in terms of the training inputs, its utilization, financial assistance, intervention needed if any for post-training support. The expected results could not be achieved. The scavengers on their part perceived that once they were selected for training, the whole responsibility of providing them self

employment or the employment rested with the government. Therefore, they held unrealistic expectations which they could not fulfill after the completion of their training. So far as training input was concerned, though not comprehensive yet elementary knowledge about the trade has been imparted to them. But in view of the present market conditions it is not enough to get settled into other respectable occupations. Besides their socio-economic conditions, there are many others factors, like market competition, marketing skills, knowledge about the planning and implementation of the activities undertaken, finance, etc. that are also responsible for it.

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