



June 7, 2010

Karin Hulshof
UNICEF India Representative
73 Lodi Estate
New Delhi 110003

Dear Ms. Hulshof:

On behalf of Navsarjan Trust (“Navsarjan”) and the Center for Human Rights and Global Justice (“CHRGJ”), we write to request a meeting with UNICEF to discuss collaborating in our work to end discrimination against Dalit children in India. Navsarjan is a grassroots Dalit rights organization working for the past 20 years in over 18 districts and 3,084 villages in Gujarat. CHRGJ is a research and advocacy center associated with New York University School of Law with an established expertise in using human rights law to fight caste discrimination.

More than 165 million people in India remain vulnerable to discrimination, exploitation, and violence simply because of their caste. The caste system relegates Dalits, or so-called untouchables, to a lifetime of segregation and abuse. Caste-based divisions dominate in housing, marriage, employment, education, and general social interaction—divisions that are reinforced through economic boycotts and physical violence. Dalits are forced to perform tasks deemed too “polluting” or degrading for non-Dalits. According to unofficial estimates, more than 1.3 million Dalits in India are employed as manual scavengers to clear human waste from dry pit latrines, often with their bare hands and without protective gear.¹ Manual scavengers are considered to be at the very bottom of the caste hierarchy and are treated as untouchables even by other Dalits.

The children of manual scavengers are particularly vulnerable to discrimination in their schools, where they are forced to perform cleaning and scavenging work, and where discrimination undermines all aspects of their education and often causes them to drop out of school altogether. “I used to sit in the front row of my class,” explained one Dalit girl. “But the students complained that they were getting polluted. So, the teacher started making me sit at the back . . . when I was in grade 6, unable to bear anymore, I dropped out. I wanted to become a Nurse or a Doctor. But now all my dreams are broken.”² While India has dramatically decreased the dropout rate for all Indian youth, the difference in dropout rates between Dalit and non-Dalit youth continues to widen, as described below.

¹ CHRGJ & Human Rights Watch, *Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination against India’s ‘Untouchables’* 83 (2007).

² *I’m Dalit: How Are You?* (Int’l Dalit Solidarity Network 2002), *available at* <http://idsn.org/news-resources/video/im-dalit-how-are-you/>

Navsarjan recently produced *Voices of Children of Manual Scavengers*, a survey of caste based discrimination faced by children of manual scavengers. Between July 6 and August 9, 2009, Navsarjan interviewed 1,048 children between the ages of 6 and 17. The survey, which was conducted across 11 districts in Gujarat,³ reveals that teachers, local governments, and community members routinely subject the children of manual scavengers to discrimination and forced labor as part of their daily experience of attending school and living in their communities. *Voices of Children* corroborates the findings of Navsarjan's and the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights' pathbreaking report *Understanding Untouchability*, which comprehensively measures the prevalence of untouchability in the state of Gujarat and documents the Indian Government's failure to adequately address these practices. The study systematically quantifies untouchability practices in 1,589 villages.⁴

Both *Voices of Children* and *Understanding Untouchability* reveal that instances of teachers discriminating against Dalit students and forcing Dalit students to clean classrooms and toilets continue to be rampant despite numerous international and domestic laws banning caste discrimination and outlawing untouchability.

We hope that Navsarjan's work can serve as a useful tool in UNICEF's important work to fight for the improvement of the lives of children across India. Details of Navsarjan's findings are included below. We look forward to hearing from you regarding our request for a meeting to discuss our mutual concerns and possible strategies to target these issues.

I. Navsarjan's Research Reveals Widespread and Systematic Discrimination Against Children of Manual Scavengers

Understanding Untouchability illustrates "the profound depth and scope of untouchability in everyday life" for Dalits in Gujarat.⁵ It concludes that a number of manifestations of untouchability are practiced almost universally in the state, and that these practices are deeply interrelated.⁶ It also documents pervasive discrimination among Dalits based on subcaste.⁷ Additionally, *Understanding Untouchability* reveals ways in which these practices are being imposed on a new generation of Dalit children; in 53 percent of the villages surveyed, Dalit children were forced to sit separately at mid-day meals and were expected to go home to drink water.⁸

In *Voices of Children*, the testimonies collected by Navsarjan expand on this data by examining in greater detail the multiple ways that untouchability affects the lives of children of manual scavengers in Gujarat. The testimonies reveal a persistent pattern of discrimination against children of manual scavengers. Examples from some of the children's testimonies are excerpted below to illustrate the patterns that Navsarjan documented. In addition, complete samples are appended for your review and the full *Voices of Children* (1,048 testimonies) is available upon UNICEF's request.

³ The districts surveyed are: Ahmedabad, Anand, Bhavnagar, Bharuch, Gandhinagar, Kheda, Mehsana, Panchmahal, Patan, Rajkot, Surendranagar, and Vadodara Districts.

⁴ An international team of human rights activists, lawyers and academics identified 98 distinct practices associated with caste discrimination and administered a questionnaire to Dalit communities soliciting information on the existence of specific practices within their village or urban area.


⁵ Navsarjan Trust & Robert F. Kennedy Ctr. for Human Rights, *Understanding Untouchability* 1 (2010).


⁶ *Id.* at 11-21.

⁷ *Id.* at 22-28.



⁸ *Id.* at 30.

The following forms of discrimination were documented with striking repetition:

- **Teachers force Dalit children to clean classrooms, offices, toilets, and urinals on a regular basis.**
 - “I collect the excrement lying near the school. The excrement of dogs and cats are collected by Valmiki children and thrown away. There is no toilet in the school so the human excrement lying outside the school compound is cleaned by Valmiki children. Women sit outside the school for defecation in the evening which the teachers of the school ask the Valmiki children to clean.” - Amrut Ishwarbhai Patadiya, age 7, Surendranagar District. 
 - “I clean classroom, collect waste from the compound in my school. Sanitation workers have been employed to clean the toilets in my school but the bathrooms have to be cleaned by me only.” - Rakeshbhai Bhanubhai Parmar, age 12, Bhavnagar District.
 - “During the week, two days I have to clean classrooms and two days I have to clean urinals and toilets in my school.” - Mukesh Rajubhai Parmar, age 13, Gandhinagar District.

- **Teachers and fellow students routinely discriminate against Dalit children. In classes and during mealtimes, they force Dalit children to sit separately, and forbid them from participating in school events.**
 - “In school girls from other caste never touch us. They never use the glass which is used by us. Even they do not sit beside us.” - Poojaben Ajitbhai Vaghela, age 10, Bhavnagar District.
 - “In my school teacher’s help only Non dalit students. They practice discrimination with us.” – Hetal Kalubhai Vegad, age 10, Bhavnagar District.
 - “The children from Vaghri, Bharwad, Thakore and other castes sit away from me during the mid-day meals in the school and tell me to remain away from them.” - Lalita Bhopabhai Harijan, age 10, Kheda District.
 - “I go to study in the government school. The teachers in our school practice discrimination with us. They make us sit in the last row in the classroom and so the teachers are not interested to teach. Our names are not written in any competitions that happen in the school. So I feel like that I will fail and so I should stop going to the school.” - Vishalkumar Rameshbhai Vaghela, age 14, Bhavnagar District. 

- **Outside the classroom, many children are employed in the disposal of dead animals, or must accompany their parents to work or to beg for food.**
 - “Every morning and in the night I go with my mother to get leftover food. I drag dead dogs and cats for which I get Rs. 10/- to 15/-. All the filth and dirt of the village is thrown in the Valmiki locality. The entire village has R.C.C. roads except the Valmiki locality. Due to dirt and filth the [V]almiki children fall sick.” - Bhaveshbhai Rajeshbhai Ladher, age 13, Surendranagar District.
 - “On every Saturday I do the cleaning work of my class room. If I drag dead dogs and cats I have vomiting so I am not doing this work. I go to beg for the leftover food at marriage time as well as in the morning and evening. I also go to clean manure pit for which I get Rs. 20/- per house per month base.” - Dimpleben Rameshbhai Purabiya, age 13, Surendranagar District.

- “Everyday I go to Botad town to collect waste from house to house. I work for the Botad Municipality. I am paid 45 rupees to do this work. While collecting the waste in the morning we also ask for leftover food. We collect the leftover food in a plastic bag and then go to a place and eat the leftover food. We also drink water after getting it from one of the houses where we go to collect waste” - Shital Savjibhai, age 15, Bhavnagar District.
 - “I daily do cleaning and sweeping work at a Koli Patel’s house in my village. I am not paid anything but to survive I have to do this. In return of this work I am given leftover food by the Koli Patel. I go myself to get leftover food because after the death of my father my mother has become mentally unstable. In case a dog or cat dies in my village then if I am called then I go to drag the dead animals and for that I am paid 5 to 10 rupees. In case I do not have any work then I go for rag picking and from that money I buy vegetables.” - Indu Jerambhai Parmar, age 11, Bhavnagar District.
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- **Many children have been forced to leave school, or have never attended school. Frequently reported reasons include:**
 - **Families’ economic circumstances and the need to work:**
 - “I left my further studies in the 10th standard because I did not get money to buy books and notebooks.” - Minakshiben Muljibhai Solanki, age 18, Kheda district.
 - “I left my school in the year 2004 after finishing 3rd grade because I have to do the cleaning and sweeping work with my parents. Now I go with my mother to clean and dump waste and garbage in the main area of the village.” - Aruna Popatbhai Purabiya, age 13, Bhavnagar District.
 - **Lack of birth certificates or other documents:**
 - “The Principal of Khedasa Primary school did not issue me a school leaving certificate so I have to leave my study. I want to study further.” - Vimalkumar Naginbhai Harijan, age 13, Anand District.
 - “I didn’t have a birth certificate so I never went to school.” - Riddhi Ranchhodbhai Naiyya, age 12, Ahmedabad district.
 - **Humiliation and impeded learning stemming from caste discrimination:**
 - “I left my studies from standard 7 because I was asked to clean toilets and urinals in the school.” - Renuka Kababhai Kabira, age 14, Ahmedabad District.
 - “I left my studies from 4th standard because everyone practiced untouchability and kept discrimination with me in my school. I was seated separately in the midday meals. Even I was not allowed to take water from the water pot.” - Kanji Vajubhai Vadodara, age 15, Rajkot District.

These practices endanger children’s health, welfare, and education, and help to perpetuate a caste system that continues to keep millions in a state of poverty and underdevelopment.

II. The Discrimination Described in the Testimonies Violates Human Rights and Indian Domestic Laws

Many of India's domestic laws and international human rights obligations⁹ prohibit caste discrimination and the treatment documented in these testimonies. Nevertheless, *Voices of Children* reveals that teachers and community members regularly violate a number of the rights protected by these treaties and laws.

The Right Against Untouchability: The Indian constitution outlaws caste discrimination and the practice of untouchability.¹⁰ The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, provides that any person who is not a member of a scheduled caste or tribe and who “compels or entices a member of a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe to do ‘begar’ or other similar forms of forced or bonded labour other than any compulsory service for public purposes imposed by Government” shall be punished with imprisonment and a fine.¹¹ The same Act prohibits a person who is not a member of a scheduled tribe or caste from intentionally insulting, or intimidating with the intent to humiliate, a member of a scheduled caste or tribe.¹² Numerous international human rights bodies have held that international human rights law forbids discrimination on the basis of caste and that India is obliged to prevent, prohibit, and eliminate such discrimination.¹³ Nevertheless, many of the children Navsarjan interviewed report being treated as “untouchable” by teachers and other students, including being segregated in classrooms and at mealtimes, being excluded from school ceremonies, and being forced to use different water cups or being denied access to school water supplies.

The Right to Education: India's newly passed Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, provides for free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years of age. The Act also requires that every local authority ensure that children belonging to disadvantaged groups “are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds.”¹⁴ The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) protects the right to education and provides that “education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall

⁹ Relevant treaties include: Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Dec. 16, 1966, 993 U.N.T.S.; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171; International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Mar. 7, 1966, 660 U.N.T.S. 195; ILO Convention No. 182 on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor; and ILO Convention No. 111 Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation.

¹⁰ The Constitution of India arts. 15 & 17.

¹¹ Section 3(1)(vi).

¹² Section 3(1)(x).

¹³ See, e.g., U.N. Human Rights Council, Draft UN Principles and Guidelines for the Effective Elimination of Discrimination Based on Work and Descent, 11th Sess., U.N. Doc. A/HRC/11/CRP.3 (2009); U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), General Recommendation No. 32 (2009); CERD General Recommendation No. 29 (2002); U.N. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), General Comment No. 20 (2002); see also CESCR Concluding Observations – India ¶ 14 (2008); CERD Concluding Observations – India, U.N. Doc. CERD/C/IND/CO/19 ¶ 8 (2007); U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) ¶ 75 (2007); U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Concluding Observations – India ¶ 27 (2004); U.N. Human Rights Committee (CCPR) Concluding Observations – India ¶ 15 (2000).

¹⁴ Section 9(c).

strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.”¹⁵ The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) prohibits caste-based discrimination in the enjoyment of fundamental rights, including the right to education¹⁶ and the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education has recommended that States remove discriminatory barriers to school enrolment and retention of girls who belong to so-called lower castes.¹⁷ The U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child has called on India to “[s]trengthen its efforts to progressively ensure” that children belonging to scheduled castes or tribes “have equal access to educational opportunities.”¹⁸ The testimonies in *Voices of Children* reveal, however, that teachers, school administrators, and other students deny Dalit children access to an equal education by systematically excluding them from opportunities and school activities and treating them as unequal, often resulting in an effective exclusion from school altogether. According to CHRGI’s research, while India has in recent years markedly reduced dropout rates for all Indian youth, the difference in dropout rates between Dalit youth and all Indian youth has actually grown from 4.39% in 1989 to 16.21% in 2008.¹⁹

The Right to Health: The ICESCR recognizes “the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.”²⁰ Under the ICERD, the right to health is a fundamental right that must be provided without discrimination.²¹ But *Voices of Children* shows that teachers and community members deny Dalit children their equal right to health by forcing them into hazardous work that includes cleaning human excrement and disposing of dead animals.

The Right to be Free From Child Labor and Manual Scavenging: The Indian Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act (1993) bars the employment or engagement of any person in work that involves the manual carrying of human excreta. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recognizes the right of all children to be protected from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.²² Nevertheless, a large number of the children describe having to accompany their parents to work, do work in the place of their parents, or labor on their own in dangerous jobs such as sanitation and disposal of animals. In addition, many of the children report that teachers or community members require them to clean toilets or pit latrines. The CRC Committee has expressed concern at the large number of children working in hazardous conditions and has called on India to fully implement the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act.²³ The Committee has also recommended that India “[a]mend the Child Labour Act, 1986 so that household enterprises and government schools and training centres are no longer exempt from

¹⁵ ICESCR, *supra* note 9, Art. 13.

¹⁶ ICERD, *supra* note 9, Art. 5.

¹⁷ Annual Report 2006 ¶ 140 (62nd Session of the Commission on Human Rights).

¹⁸ CRC Concluding Observations, *supra* note 13, at ¶ 65(b).

¹⁹ Values calculated based on dropout data from the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and enrollment data from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, First Annual Report, 28 (1994) *available at* <http://ncst.nic.in/index3.asp?ssid=482&subsublinkid=128&langid=1>; National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Education in India: 2007-08 Participation and Expenditure, A-313, A-322 (2010) *available at* http://mospi.nic.in/mospi_nssso_rept_pubn.htm.

²⁰ ICESCR, *supra* note 9, Art. 12.

²¹ ICERD, *supra* note 9, Art. 5.

²² CRC, *supra* note 9, Art. 32.

²³ CRC Concluding Observations, *supra* note 13, ¶¶ 72-73.

prohibitions on employing children.”²⁴

The Right to Be Free From Slavery: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)²⁵ and the ICESCR²⁶ outlaw slavery and forced labor and require fair compensation for work. According to the testimonies collected in *Voices of Children*, however, teachers and community members force Dalit children into unpaid labor, primarily cleaning schools, homes, and toilets, in what constitutes a modern form of slavery. The CERD Committee has noted with concern the large numbers of Dalit children forced to work as manual scavengers, in extremely unhealthy working conditions, and in exploitative labor arrangements including debt bondage.²⁷

III. Recommendations

The discrimination faced by children of manual scavengers contravenes UNICEF’s mission to nurture and care for children as the cornerstone of human progress. UNICEF has a long history of working to “ensure that each child born in [India] gets the best start in life, thrives and develops to his or her full potential.”²⁸ UNICEF India has particularly focused on children’s right to education and to proper sanitation. Furthermore, UNICEF India’s 2008-2012 Country Programme emphasizes social inclusion throughout all areas of the organization’s work.²⁹ UNICEF should work in coordination with the other U.N. human rights bodies referred to in this letter to ensure inter-agency cooperation to protect the children of manual scavengers from the pervasive discrimination documented by Navsarjan.

Consistent with the work that UNICEF is currently doing throughout India, Navsarjan and CHRGJ urge UNICEF to address the impact of caste discrimination and manual scavenging on children and:

- Increase UNICEF’s focus on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by Dalit children and children from other marginalized communities, using a rights-based framework.
- Conduct a country-wide study on the issues facing Dalit children, with a particular emphasis on the children of manual scavengers, using a research methodology that can measure caste-based discrimination in schools and communities.
- Work to reduce the high drop-out rate of Dalit children and the poor quality of education they receive in primary schools by coordinating with Dalit NGOs working in the field of education to assist in government teacher training, strategic planning, and better implementation of government education programs.
- Create public attention and dialogue about caste-based discrimination by working with the Indian government agencies to include these issues in the curriculum and by implementing campaigns similar to the Meena Manch Campaign and the Girl Stars project for improving the school attendance of girls.
- Address the issue of caste discrimination in schools as a global phenomenon affecting Dalit children in a number of caste-affected countries.

²⁴ *Id.* at ¶ 73.

²⁵ ICCPR, *supra* note 9, Art. 8.

²⁶ ICESCR, *supra* note 9, Art. 7.

²⁷ CERD Concluding Observations, *supra* note 13, ¶ 23.

²⁸ UNICEF India, Overview, <http://www.unicef.org/india/overview.html> (last visited Apr. 19, 2010).

²⁹ UNICEF India, The Country Programme, http://www.unicef.org/india/overview_4075.htm (last visited Apr. 15, 2010).

Navsarjan and CHRGJ are greatly interested in learning more about UNICEF's efforts to improve the lives of Dalit children, particularly the lives of children of manual scavengers. We hope to meet with you to explore ways that we can work together to end the violations that permeate the lives of these children.

We look forward to your reply to our letter and our request for a meeting to further discuss these issues and explore the possibility of future collaboration.

Sincerely,



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Cc: Yogendra Mathur
Joaquin Gonzalez-Aleman

Encl:

1. Navsarjan Trust & Robert F. Kennedy Ctr. for Human Rights, *Understanding Untouchability* (2010).
2. CHRGJ & Human Rights Watch, *Hidden Apartheid: Caste Discrimination against India's 'Untouchables'* (2007).

Sample Testimonies from *Voices of Children of Manual Scavengers*

“My name is Padma Ratilal Goriya. I live with my parents in Vasai Village in Daskroi Taluka of Ahmedabad district. I am 13 years old. In school, children from Darbar caste used to tease us with derogatory words like “Bhangda”. Non dalit children used to throw our school bags out of the classroom. Our parents complained to the school teachers. The teachers replied that you are “Bhangiya” and if the non Dalits call you “Bhangiya” then your children should not feel bad. Hence I left my school from 2nd standard in the year 2003. At present I go to beg for leftover food every night in the Darbar, Patel, Thakor and Rabari Locality with my mother. I drag away dead dogs and I get a small bowl of grains from each home.”



“My name is Nayanbhai Khushalbhai Nathani. I am 12 years old. I live with my parents in Bala village in Vadhwani taluka in Surendranagar district. I face discrimination and untouchability from other caste students at the time of mid-day meals. One of my friends earlier used to eat with me but later his mother came to know this and asked his son not to eat with me. Valmiki children students are not allowed to serve the food and we have to sit separately. For the entire week, I an[d] 5 other valmiki children clean the toilets and urinals. I go to get leftover food during social occasions with my mother. I drag dead dogs and cats and for that I get 40 to 50 rupees. During the school prayers we are asked to collect paper and waste from the ground and also to do cleaning work.”



“My name is Gayatri Gordhanbhai Purbiya. I am 13 years old. I live with my parents in Vautha village in Dholka taluka of Ahmedabad district. I study in the government school in my village. Discrimination is practiced against me in my school. The Darbar girls by mistake if they get touched by me then they sprinkle water to purify themselves. I am not allowed to participate in the cultural programs. I am not allowed to sing prayer in my school. Once a week I clean my class room. I also clean one urinal and one toilet once a week in my school. Thrice in a month I go to Darbar locality to get leftover food. I also go to do dragging of dead dogs and rats and in return I get 1 kilo grains. In my school I get turn to clean but not to sing prayer. Whenever it's the turn of Darbar girls to do cleaning work in the school, they come late from their homes and so we have to do the cleaning work. But they do not do the same if we come late to the school.”



“My name is Kirankumar Rameshbhai Chauhan. I am 14 years old. I live with my parents in Malvan village in Patdi taluka of Surendranagar district. I am not allowed to sing prayers, not allowed to give answers to the questions and not allowed to take part in any cultural programs organized in our school. In the school the mid-day meal is cooked by a Harijan woman so the Muslim and Patel students do not come to eat. The teachers and other caste students practice discrimination against me. Everybody addresses us as “Bhangis”. The urinals and toilets are only cleaned by the Valmiki children students. Twice a week I clean one classroom. I feel shy so I don't go to get leftover food. Sometimes I go to drag dead dog or cat and for this I get Rs. 10/- to 20/-.”



“My name is Geeta Mafabhai Solanki. I am 16 years old. I live with my mother in Lodariyal village in Sanand taluka of Ahmedabad district. To help my mother I left my school in the year-2006 after completing standard 6th. I also drag dead dogs



and cats and for that I get 5 Rupees or 500 gram grains. When we go to drag dogs and cats, village people use bad words for us. It is our sin that we are born in valmiki caste.”

“My name is Vimalkumar Naginbhai Harijan. I live with my father in Borsad Town in Borsad taluka of Anand District. My mother dead because of breast cancer I am 13 years old.. I left my study from the 3rd standard in the year 2003 due to change of my school. I do sanitation work at the time of Navratri and I get Rs. 300/- for this work. I go to beg for leftover food in Dhartinagar area. The Principal of Khedasa Primary school did not issue me a school leaving certificate so I have to leave my study. I want to study further.”



“My name is Kiran Natvarbhai Vaghela. I live in Botad town of Bhavnagar district. I am 17 years old. I live with my mother. My father has died because he was suffering from diabetes. I left school in the year 2002 after finishing 5th grade. The reason for leaving my studies was our poor economic situation. Earlier I used to do cleaning work in a petrol pump. But because I was not paid good salary so I left that job and now clean the streets in the society. I am paid 1500 rupees per month. If I drag dead dogs and cats then I get 5 to 100 rupees. The price of dragging the dead animal depends upon the walking distance. I myself go to get leftover in the night. I get 250 rupees if I have to clean a private septic tank. Every 15 days I have to dump the excrement from the vaada toilets into a tractor.”



“My name is Anjali Pratapbhai Solanki. I live with my parents in Bagidor village in Godhra Taluka of Panchmahal district. I am 7 years old. Teachers do not teach in my school and they practice discrimination with me. I clean 1 class room 2 times in a week. I can't write my name even.”



“My name is Kajalben Prahladbhai Chauhan. I am 9 years old. I live with my parents in Savda village in Patdi taluka, Dist: Surendranagar. I am in 4th standard. Valmiki children are not allowed to take part in to the cultural programs organized by the school. Children from Devi poojak caste keep discrimination with me. We also are forced to clean the play ground of our school. I accompany my grand mother for leftover food collection, and I also go to drag a dead dog or cat and for which I am paid Rs. 5/- or grains. I lose the self respect where we go to take left over food.”

