

Weekly Livelihoods Update

5 June 2018

- ✚ **After 25 Years of Broken Promises, India is Counting its Manual Scavengers. Again** : After The Prohibition of Employment of Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act 2013 came into being, the government recognised 12,742 manual scavengers in 13 states. 82% were in Uttar Pradesh. Activists, politicians and even the Supreme Court have said that this number is a gross under representation, so have the government's own statistics. According to Census of India 2011, there are 740,078 households across the country where human excreta is removed by a person from a dry latrine. On top of this, there are also septic tanks, sewers, railway platforms from where human excreta is cleaned by people. In addition, the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 said that there are 182,505 families in rural India engaged in manual scavenging. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recognised that the problem exists, and has begun a new survey process, from January 2018, to count India's manual scavengers. The first phase (currently ongoing) involves counting those who clean night soil (buckets and cesspools in which excreta is collected overnight) and pit latrines in 164 districts across five states. The second phase will look at people who clean septic tanks, sewers and railway tracks. The survey is expected to include those still engaged in the profession, as well as those who left it after 2013. (Visit <https://thewire.in/caste/after-25-years-of-broken-promises-india-is-counting-its-manual-scavengers-again> for further reading).
- ✚ **E-mandis in Demand**: Globally, India has the second largest amount of arable land (next only to the US) but less than 35% of this land comes under irrigation. Consequently, in a bad rainfall year, crops fail. The problem is aggravated as 83% of farmers in India, who are marginal and small farmers (someone with less than two hectare of landholding), do not have the wherewithal to understand technology or have the money power to mechanise agriculture (that will enhance productivity). Loan waivers actually do harm to small farmers as with less credit outlay from the formal sector, these farmers increasingly have to depend on the informal sector. Moreover, loan waivers mostly help richer and bigger farmers, leaving the smaller ones worse-off in the future. According to a study, titled Farmer Distress: An Analysis of Intervention in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, India Consensus Report, 2018, we show that the real benefit of the farmers will come through two interventions –operationalising e-mandis (online trading of agricultural output) and building more storage facilities for farm output. (Visit <https://thewire.in/agriculture/not-farm-loan-waiver-what-small-and-marginal-farmers-need-is-more-e-mandis> for detailed Analysis)
- ✚ **Model Contract Farming and Services Act**: On May 16 this year, Union minister for agriculture released the 41-page Model Contract Farming and Services Act, 2018. The Act brings all services in the agriculture value chain, including pre-production, production and post-production, within its ambit along with contract farming activity. (Visit <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/20180611-green-shoots-1246599-2018-06-02> for detailed analysis)
- ✚ **Mango output in UP**: Bad weather and recent thunderstorms has taken a heavy toll on Mango output in UP this year. This has not only hit the prices of the 'king of fruits' but also its quality and the quantum of exports. Mango production, which was estimated to be around 50 lakh

tonnes this year, is now expected to reach only 25-30 lakh tonnes in the state because of continued thunderstorms, dust storms and untimely showers this season. The mango belt farmers have also been facing problems of insufficient power and water supply and have not got any special advantage. UP has 14 Mango Belts and is also one of the major producers. Dussheri and Chausa varieties are exported from the state.(Visit <https://www.thewire.in/environment/bad-weather-takes-a-heavy-toll-on-mango-output-in-up-exports-may-be-hit> for further reading)

✚ **National Bio Fuel Policy:** The move to let damaged crops be used for fossil fuel production may hurt food availability, price. (Visit <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/guzzle-grain-go-hungry/300210> for detailed Analysis).

✚ **Brass Smiths of Bihar:** The Brass Smiths of Parev district (42kms from the Bihar's capital Patna) which is also known as the hub for traditional brass utensils manufacturing units are keeping the traditional crafts alive despite facing hurdles such as no government support, the lack of banking infrastructure and inadequate power supply are some of the problems they are facing.(Visit <https://thewire.in/labour/brass-smith-traditional-craft-bihar-hardships-government> for further reading)

✚ **Extra Interest on KCC loans:** In February this year, farmers of Chhani Bari village in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan staged a protest in front of the local SBI branch against the extra interest charged on their Kisan Credit Card (KCC) loans. After the 58 days of protesting, interest of approximately Rs 16,52,000 was reversed in 350 KCC accounts. The bank authorities admitted that SBI made a mistake in the subvention. However, thousands of farmers of the village are still waiting to get back their hard-earned money.(Visit <https://thewire.in/rights/sbi-rajasthan-farmers-extra-interest-kisan-credit-card> for further reading).

✚ **The Politics of Contemporary Dairying in Gujarat:** A study on market-driven agriculture in the dry lands in Gujarat, especially households which embarked on dairying through the acquisition of loan-buffaloes, reveals that dairying is shot through with the politics of economic value involving dairies and milk producers. Commercial milk-production is interrupted by economic value encountering other values and affective relations of milk producers. (Visit <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/22/special-articles/cattle-milk-and-womens-labour.html> for detailed analysis)

✚ **Law for PwDs:** A round-table on accessible road transport for persons with disabilities (PwDs) was organised by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) in New Delhi on May 30. Some key suggestions made by a cross-section of individuals working in the disability sector included the need for making public transport friendly for PwDs, easing norms for modification of private vehicles (by PwDs) and encouraging vehicle manufacturers to build vehicles modified as per their needs.(Visit <https://thewire.in/law/disabled-persons-public-transport-access> for further reading).

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