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शास्त्री भवन

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SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL
JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT
SHASTRI BHAWAN
NEW DELHI-110001

January 31, 2000.

Dear Ramesh

As you are aware the inhuman practice of scavenging is continuing till day and that it should be continuing even after fifty-two years of our independence, is indeed unfortunate. In the past several programmes were formulated to eradicate this evil. However, there has been rather limited success. The primary reason for this has been that we have not been able to convert the dry latrines into wet latrines, and therefore failed in our attempts to remove the need for scavenging and scavengers. The Government is according the eradication of scavenging high priority and the Prime Minister himself announced in December 1999 that a "Mission Mode approach with the aim of abolishing the inhuman practice of carrying night-soil as headload" should be adopted.

2. With a view to eradicating the practice of scavenging this Ministry has decided to adopt the innovative scheme of Sanitary Marts to provide alternate employment to scavengers. These Marts would serve the twin purpose of gainfully employing scavengers to improve the sanitary conditions in the towns & villages. These Marts have been established in West Bengal and the programme is working very successfully. We, however, additionally propose to rehabilitate scavengers through the establishment of Sanitary Marts in which they could be employed. The basic strategy would be to rehabilitate the scavengers by forming them into cooperatives that would run the Sanitary Marts. These marts would be responsible for the creation of the demand for latrines and also construct them for the beneficiaries. The SCDCs (Scheduled Caste Development Corporations) would be designated as the implementing agencies. The following steps need to be taken by your officers urgently.

- 2.1 Identify town with a population between 20,000 and 1,00,000 where scavenging is prevalent.
- 2.2 Identify NGOs or other voluntary organisations that would assist in the running of the Sanitary Marts.

3. I have enclosed an approach paper that outlines the strategy that could be adopted to use the concept of Sanitary Marts to rehabilitate the scavengers. I shall be grateful if you could have it kindly examined expeditiously. We are planning to invite the