

Manhole deaths: sewerage board JE among three held

- [Bengaluru Bureau](#)



A file photo of rescue workers trying to recover the bodies of four men who died of asphyxia in a manhole in Doddaballapur town on April 3.

Three arrests have been made several days after four people — two labourers who were trying to unclog a manhole, and two people who tried rescuing them — lost their lives in Doddaballapur town.

The incident took place on April 3.

The Doddaballapur police arrested Prakash, junior engineer (JE) of the Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board who was employed on contract for the project, and Jayaram and Mohan, employees of the Hyderabad-based contractor on Monday.

The police said they had been booked under section 304 of the IPC (death due to negligence), as well as under provisions of the SC and the ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 and the Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. The contractor of the company, however, is still at large.

Earlier in the day, a fact-finding committee of pro-people organisations urged the government to take stringent action against the erring officials and contractor responsible for the deaths. The committee, represented by the Safaikarmachari Kavalu Samiti, Peoples Union for Civil Liberties-Karnataka, Peoples Democratic Forum, and Alternative Law Forum, blamed the government for failing to implement the Supreme Court order that prohibits manual scavenging.

K.B. Obalesh of Safaikarmachari Kavalu Samiti said since December 2008, 48 people involved in manual scavenging had died, including 13 during 2015–16. In the Doddaballapur incident, there were blatant violations of norms, he added.

Ramdas Rao of PUCL-K said in the previous incidents too the government had given compensation but not initiated action against contractors. He stressed the need of a mechanism to ensure such accidents do not recur.

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of the company that was employing the labourers is

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