

Impact of sanitation workers life as frontline workers during COVID

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Abstract

Sanitation workers are the pillar for government to achieve the mission of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. But they not getting the proper recognition from society. They face lot of disputes like financial problems, Social ignorance, workplace issues, and also the health issues due to work. During COVID, frontline workers face many difficulties physically and mentally, and financially too. This study aimed to understand awareness of the work safety of sanitation workers' life during COVID. Because the pandemic still continues in the world and it makes more threats to human lives. So this study is important to study the workers taking more risks in their workplace.

Keywords: Socio-economic, sanitation, work safety.

INTRODUCTION

“To clean the country, you have to address the problems of those who have spent a lifetime cleaning the country” – Bezwada Wilson.

Despite increasing focus by the government and programs such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, there are five million people employed in sanitation work of some sort in India with about two million of them working in ‘high risk’ conditions. The work of sanitation plays major role in the preventive type of public health. It is also another monopoly function to be undertaken by the municipality. Sanitation includes removal of rubbish, sludge, night soil, and dead animal controls of tiles and mosquitos, drain drainage, and sweeping. There are a number of challenges and constraints faced by sanitation workers. Due to COVID -19 in March 2020, the Indian Government announced a nationwide lockdown to control this pandemic situation. In this critical

period, many people fight against the covid as frontline workers. Sanitation workers play a significant role in waste management during this pandemic period.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sanitation workers are the pillar of the waste management system, but most of them work under cruel conditions without safety measures and social security. The COVID-19 pandemic showing no signs of reduction will increase the risk of sanitation workers and manual scavengers. The five million sanitation workers who clean garbage, sewers, and public toilets are in direct contact with human waste and toxic gases and are often at risk of chronic diseases. So many sanitation workers tested positive for the novel coronavirus during this period. These issues have raised concerns about the lives of sanitation employees during this pandemic. Their essential services come under the frontline category. This study will focus on the following as

1. The occupational exposure to sweeping is associated with the health issues of the workers.
2. There are a number of challenges and constraints which affect sweeper communities' rights and equal opportunities to enjoy fundamental human rights.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the sanitation workers.
2. To identify the problems of sanitation workers during the different waves of COVID-19.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The main intention of the study is to know how the sanitation workers affect this unexpected situation that the country is not meet before this century. This study tries to understand the impact of lockdown and partial lockdown by state and central governments. Hence, it aims to analyze crises met by the sweeper workers who faced the problems like financial, health, and lack of support from society and also aims to understand the level of awareness of sanitation workers regarding their rights and the scheme which is provided by the government. The aim of the study is to create awareness and to provide the availability of financial support schemes

rendered by the government to overcome both the COVID -19 infections and financial crisis during upcoming waves too.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Syed Lutful Kabir Chowdhury, “Traditional Profession and Livelihood: A Study on Sweeper Community” conducted the study with the aim to find the trend of the traditional profession, the livelihood situation of the sweeper community, and causes behind the living in poverty in Bangladesh. Survey and focus group discussion (FGD) was taken as method. The findings show that all households of the sweeper are being deprived of socio-economic advantages, compared to the general community. Most of the sweeper’s households are burdened by excess expenditure over income. They are depending on loans from the informal sector. Over the generation, they have not been changing their profession radically due to several causes. Government and the non-government sectors should take more initiative that ensures sweeper communities access to the same rights and services enjoyed by mainstream society. Immediate action is necessary to uplift and reform their livelihood and profession.

Glenn B. Lagura and Victoria O(2018), “What is Life for Job Order Street Sweepers in the City Governments of Davao Region? A Phenomenological Study” studied phenomenological undertaking to describe the lived realities of the street sweepers working in the City Local Government Units (CLGUs) in Davao Region, Philippines. In-depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group discussions were employed in collecting the data. Findings revealed that they are working with no security of tenure leading to meager compensation and non-existent benefits. The dearth of necessary work implements and bureaucratic red tape were found out as predicaments encountered other than insecurity and vulnerability of the work. In solving the problems encountered, loan dependence and moonlighting turned out to be the primary solution aside from perseverance to the job, detachment, and nonchalance as well as their wishful thinking. From the generated results, it can be learned that they desire recognition and respect, and environmental responsibility among the citizenry needs to be cultivated. Amidst the deprivation due to the nature of their employment, there is pride and satisfaction in doing their job. A street sweeper’s work is hard and unenviable, but job security remains an elusive dream.

METHODOLOGY:

For this study, the primary data will be collected from 100 respondents sanitation workers based on a convenient sampling method. The secondary data will be sourced from Various journals, magazines, books, newspapers, research reports, and articles on the related topics published in the refereed journals.

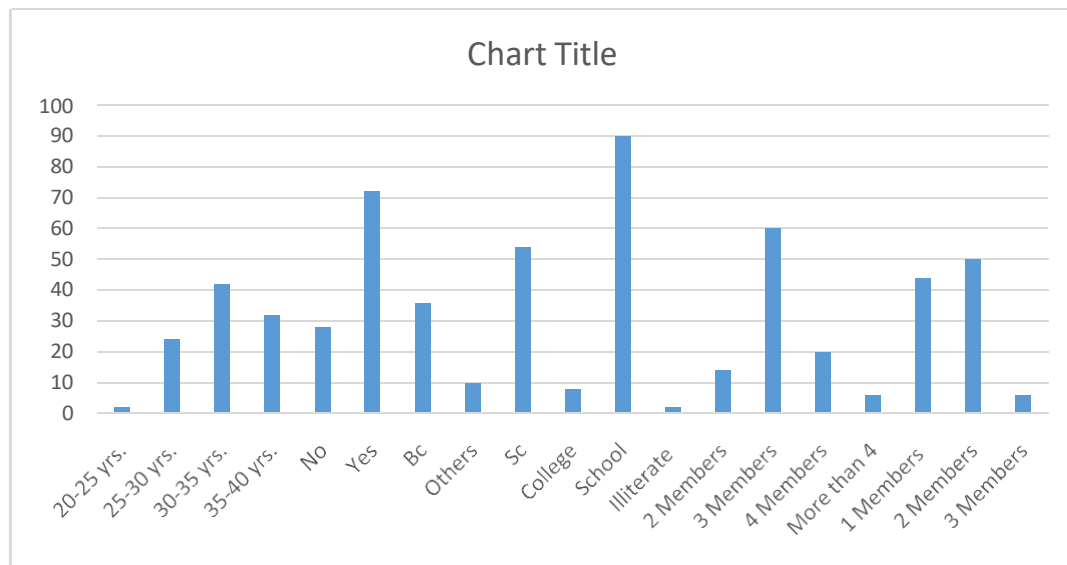
FINDINGS

A survey was conducted to find the Socio-economic quantitative information of sanitary workers.

Table no 1 personal information of sanitary workers

	Category	No of respondents(in percentage)
AGE	20-25 yrs.	2
	25-30 yrs.	24
	30-35 yrs.	42
	35-40 yrs.	32
Married status	No	28
	Yes	72
Social category	BC	36
	Others	10
	SC	54
Education level of worker	College	8
	School	90
	Illiterate	2
Size of family	2 Members	14
	3 Members	60
	4 Members	20

	More than 4	6
How many earners in yours family	1 Members	44
	2 Members	50
	3 Members	6



The above table shows that major (42%) of the respondents belongs to the age group of 30-35 years. The sanitation workers (72%) are married. The majority of the workers (54%) belong to the SC category. Most of the respondents (90%) completed only school-level education. Most of the worker's (60%) family consists of 3 members. The majority of workers (50%) family have two-earner

Table no 2 work profile of the sanitation workers

	VARIABLES	%
Mode of salary payment	Monthly	80
	Weekly	20
Nature of work	Contract	52
	Permanently	40
	Temporary	8
Years of experience	1-5 years	68
	10-15 years	8

	5-10 years	24
Are you satisfied with your salary	Highly dissatisfied	10
	Dissatisfied	55
	Neutral	5
	Satisfied	20
	Highly satisfied	10

This study reveals that the majority (80%) of workers get a salary monthly basis. The majority (52%) of workers are contract based. The workers (68%) are having 1-5 years' experience. The majority (55%) of the respondents were not satisfied with their salary.

Table No:3 Health issues of the respondents

	VARIABLE	%
Do you have any health issues	Eye burns	24
	Respiratory treat infections	20
	Skin problems	36
	Wounds	20
		100
How can you treat your medical problems	Government hospital	62
	Private hospital	26
	Self-medicine	12
		100

The above table reveals that workers face medical issues in their work conditions, 24% of the workers were affected by eye burns, 20% of workers got respiratory treatment infections, 36% of the respondents got skin problems, and 20% workers got wounds.

Table No: 4 usage of work safety measures of the respondents

Variables	Not used	Rarely	Used
Wearing PPE suite	2	14	84
Wearing Gloves	16	44	40

Injections/vaccination	18	38	44
Precautionary medicines	20	22	58
Cleaning hand with disinfection	4	26	70

Results on the usage of work safety measures of respondents (84%) who are wearing PPE suits used. The majority (44%) of the respondents used gloves rarely. The majority of workers used vaccination (44%), precautionary medicines (58%), and cleaning hands with disinfections (70%).

Table 5 impact on covid in your work life

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
Illness	50	34	16
Financial problems	62	34	4
Fear about diseases	62	24	6
Working in different work area	58	26	16

Results show that the majority of the respondents strongly agree that illness (50%), financial problems (62%), Fear of diseases (62%), working in different work areas (58%) facing the impact of the COVID on the life workers life

Conclusion

This study reveals that workers are appointed on a contract base. They get low pay for their work and low social recognition. The hazardous nature work has been done by the workers. So they face many health issues. This study discloses the workers are facing a lot of impact during the COVID as personally and also in their workplace. The workers expect social recognition and support from the government. Society should be educated about waste management which may help the risk in the work. the government strictly implement the rule and policy to secure the life of the frontline worker.

Reference

1. Glenne B.Lagura and Victoria O(2018), **“What is Life for Job Order Street Sweepers in the City Governments of Davao Region? A Phenomenological Study”** International Journal of Management Excellence Volume 11 No.1 June 2018 © TechMind Research Society 1498
2. Syed Lutful Kabir Chowdhury, **“Traditional Profession and Livelihood: A Study on Sweeper Community”**, Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1700 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2855 (Online) Vol.2, No.3 87.