

# A STUDY OF VILLAGE CLEANING AND SANITATION WORKERS BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS IN DINDIGUL.”

1.**Dr. Anjumol M.R** Guest Faculty, Department of Political Science and Development Administration, Gandhigram Rural Institute – Deemed to be University, Gandhigram-624302.

2.**Dr. D. Sivakumar** Guest Faculty, Department of Public Administration, Government Arts college Trichy

## Abstract

Keywords: Sanitation workers, public health, occupational health risk, low wages

## Introduction

Cleanliness and sanitation are important components of a healthy and sustainable village. Sanitation workers play a key role in maintaining the hygiene and well-being of rural communities. These workers are responsible for the collection and disposal of waste, cleaning of streets and public areas, and ensuring that sanitation facilities are maintained properly. Sanitation workers play a important role in maintaining public hygiene by managing waste, cleaning streets, and ensuring safe sanitation practices. Despite their crucial contribution, these workers often face numerous challenges including poor working conditions, lack of proper equipment, low wages etc.

The government introduced different laws like The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act of 2013 and The Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan- but the situation remains same. In recent years with rapid economic development, urbanization has become an important trend in developing countries. As a result of urbanization, the large population concentrated in cities has brought many environmental and sanitation problems, including a lot of garbage, dirty streets, blocked drains and walls plastered with illegal advertising.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sanitation workers play an important role in maintaining public hygiene and cleanliness, at the same time they face numerous social, economic, and occupational challenges. They have poor working conditions. In many situation they operate without adequate protective gear such as gloves, masks, and boots. Manual scavenging is legally banned, still continues in different parts. Health hazards and lack of medical support exposure to human waste, garbage, and toxic substances leads to respiratory issues, skin infections, and chronic illnesses. Low wages and irregular payment are the other problems faced by sanitation workers, especially those on contract, are often underpaid and face delays in salary. Inadequate training and lack of modern equipment, worker often perform tasks without proper training. This leads to inefficiency, injuries, and increased health risks. They have limited awareness of their rights and benefits including the prohibition of manual scavenging, entitlement to safety gear, and welfare schemes.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the problem faced by the sanitation’s workers in Dindigul District
- To examine the working conditions of the sanitation workers

## METHODOLOGY

The research is based on mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of their working conditions, health risks, and socio-economic challenges. A structured survey will be conducted among a representative sample of workers. The study will also involve site observations to assess the work environment and use of protective equipment.

The purposive sampling method to ensure representation across different categories of sanitation workers, including municipal employees, private agency workers, and informal sector laborers. Data collection is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary data will be gathered through structured questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussions with selected participants.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

✚ The finds that 33 respondents fall within the 36–45 age group. This is followed by the 26–35 age group, which includes 14 respondents. Only 2 respondents (4%) are aged above 45, and the least represented group is the 18–25 age with just 1 respondent making up 2% of the sample. Overall, the 36–45 age group had the highest level of participation in the survey.

✚ A majority of the participants, 32 individuals (64%), have completed secondary education and 10 respondents (20%) who have studied up to the higher secondary level. 8 respondents (14%) reported having no formal education.

✚ A significant majority of the respondents, 40 individuals (80%), are married. Only a small proportion, 2 respondents (4%), are unmarried. Additionally, 8 respondents (16%) fall under the category of "others," which may include individuals who are divorced, widowed, or prefer not to disclose their marital status.

✚ The study explains household waste disposal methods among the respondents, the most common method of waste disposal is through municipality collection, with 30 people (60%) utilizing this service. The second most frequent method is using a garbage bin, chosen by 15 respondents, which accounts for 30% of the total. Dumping waste in open areas is less common, with only 5 people (10%) adopting this practice. Notably, none of the respondents reported burning household waste, resulting in a 0% rate for this method. Overall, the majority of the population prefers organized waste management through municipal services, while a small proportion still relies on less environmentally friendly practices.

✚ A significant majority, 40 individuals (80%), confirmed that waste is collected from their households, indicating effective waste management services in most areas. On the other hand, 10 respondents (20%) reported that their waste is not collected,

✚ Out of 50 respondents, 40 individuals (80%) reported that they have placed a dustbin in their home, indicating a strong awareness and practice of proper waste disposal. On the other hand, 10 respondents (20%) stated that no dustbin is placed in their household, which may suggest a lack of resources or awareness regarding sanitary waste management practices.

✚ A majority of respondents, accounting for 60%, reported that garbage is collected daily, indicating a high level of sanitation service and waste management efficiency. Another 15 respondents (30%) stated that their garbage is collected weekly, while 5 respondents (10%) mentioned that garbage is rarely collected.

✚ The 94% of the respondent experiencing water logging. In contrast, only 3 respondents, making up 6%, indicated that they did not face any issues with water logging. This data highlights a widespread concern regarding water logging

✚ The 25 respondents (50%) reported that they use public toilets. The remaining 25 respondents (50%) stated that they do not use public toilets. This equal distribution indicates a balanced divide in public toilet usage, possibly reflecting varied access, personal preferences, or differences in sanitation facilities available to the respondents.

✚ 30 respondents (60%) stated that they are aware of or have witnessed regular cleaning schedules or cleanliness drives in their area. On the other hand, 20 respondents (40%) reported that no such initiatives take place, or they are not aware of any. This indicates that while a majority recognize efforts toward maintaining cleanliness, a significant portion still feels there is a lack of visible or effective cleaning programs in place.

✚ A majority of 37 respondents (74%) have work experience of below 5 years. In contrast, 13 respondents (26%) reported having more than 5 years of work experience. This indicates that the workforce involved in the survey is relatively young or early in their professional careers, with a larger portion having less than five years of experience in their respective fields.

✚ 25 respondents reported working for less than 6 hours a day, while the remaining 25 respondents work for more than 6 hours a day. This equal distribution suggests a balanced variation in daily working hours among the respondents, possibly indicating flexibility in work schedules or differing job roles and responsibilities.

✚ A significant majority 45 respondents, accounting for 90% indicated that they do recycle plastic. In contrast, only 5 respondents, representing 10%, reported not engaging in plastic recycling. So, they have a strong awareness and participation in plastic recycling practices among the respondents, suggesting a positive attitude toward environmental sustainability.

✚ The table shows the responses of 50 responded regarding their preferred location for defecation. None of the respondents (0%) chose "Open field," indicating that no one prefers this option. In contrast, all 50 respondents (100%) selected "Community toilet," showing a unanimous preference for this choice. The total number of respondents is 50, accounting for 100% of the sample.

## CONCLUSION

Sanitation workers play a crucial role in maintaining public health and environmental cleanliness. They are an indispensable part of the society for preventing the spread of diseases and maintaining hygiene. They stand for the well-being of the people but their work is unnoticed. Cleaning and sanitation workers are indispensable to the functioning of the community as well as the institution. Despite their contribution to the society, they face several challenges including occupational health risk, low wages and inadequate safety measures. Ensuring their wellbeing through proper equipment, health insurance, fair wages and improved working conditions. The policy makers must recognize their valuable services. Strengthening welfare measures not only improve their quality of life but also contribute to the healthier and cleaner communities.

## References

1. Taylor, S., & McIntosh, C. (2014). Occupational Health and Safety of Sanitation Workers: A Global Perspective. *Journal of Occupational Health*.
2. Johnson, M. (2018). Workforce Diversity in Cleaning and Sanitation: A Case Study in Urban Environments. *Journal of Labor Studies*.

3. Chen, L. (2019). Exploring the Challenges of Sanitation Workers in Low-Income Countries: Case Studies and Policy Recommendations. *International Journal of Environmental Health*.
4. Selvaraj, G. (2017). *Manual Scavenging in Tamil Nadu: Legal and Social Struggles*. Thanjavur Publishers.
5. Palaniswamy, K., & Ravi, S. (2020). Public Health and the Role of Sanitation Workers in Tamil Nadu: A Review of Policies and Practices. *Journal of Public Health Policy*.
6. Kumar, D., & Radhakrishnan, S. (2018). The Impact of Sanitation Workers on Public Health in Tamil Nadu: An Empirical Study. *South Indian Journal of Environmental Health*.
7. Anand, P. (2019). Social Discrimination and Sanitation Workers in Tamil Nadu: A Critical Analysis. *Journal of Indian Sociology*.
8. Prakash, V. (2012). *Sanitation Workers in Tamil Nadu: Labor Rights and Challenges*. Tamil Nadu Institute of Labor Studies.
9. Kumar, S. & Ramasamy, S. (2016). Sanitation Workers and Health Hazards in Tamil Nadu: An Analysis of Occupational Safety and Health Policies. *Journal of Environmental Health and Safety*.
10. Ambedkar, B.R. (2018). *Caste, Class, and Sanitation: A Study of Dalit Sanitation Workers in Tamil Nadu*.

#### Copyright & License:

© Authors retain the copyright of this article. This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), permitting unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.