



# AN OVERVIEW OF STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECT OF SANITARY WORKERS IN INDIA

*Author, Jatin Chauhan Research Scholar*

*Saket College of Arts, Science and Commerce Kalyan (East), India.*

*Co-Author, Dr. Deepak Sable (Guide),*

*Professor and Principal of Bharat College of Arts & Commerce Hendrepada, Kulgaon, Badlapur (w) 42150.*

## Abstract

Sanitary workers play a crucial role for keeping our communities healthy and clean. They make sure that garbage is picked up, thrown away properly, and managed well. This helps stop sickness from spreading, keeps the environment safe, and makes everyone feel better. However, these workers often have to deal with dangerous jobs, people treating them badly, and not earning enough money. It's crucial to understand how much they help us and to make sure they're treated fairly and safely at work. this study will help us to know the sanitary workers work environment, health and safety concerns, job satisfaction, socio-economic conditions, and the impact of their work on their own health, public health and sanitation systems.

The Research paper is based on information collected from secondary sources like academic journals, government reports, websites, etc.

This study shows the socio-economic hurdles encountered by sanitary workers in India, emphasizing the necessity for better work environments, acknowledgment in society, and financial assistance to safeguard their welfare and respect. Tackling these challenges is crucial for promoting fairness and equality in sanitation workforce regulations and methods.

**Keywords:** Socio-Economic, Sanitary Workers.

## Introduction

The definition of sanitation workers given by World Health Organization (WHO) is a person responsible for emptying toilets, pits and septic tanks; entering manholes and sewers to fix or unblock them; transporting faecal waste; working treatment plants; as well as cleaning public toilets or defecation around homes and businesses. More broadly speaking, sanitation workers may also be involved in cleaning streets, parks, public spaces, sewers, storm water drains, and public toilets. Sanitary workers are the key persons responsible for cleanliness of the country. Thus, sanitary services are given by the sanitary workers for the betterment of human health. But, they are facing many challenges such as (i) issues related to their health and safety: cuts, injuries, musculoskeletal problems, respiratory problems, gastro intestinal problems and infectious diseases like gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, cryptosporidiosis, giardiasis, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, leptospirosis, salmonellosis, typhoid fever and tetanus.; (ii) legal and institutional issues: poor enforcement of law, lack of standard operating procedures, poor legal protection and workers safety which is influenced by the availability of equipment and materials used for doing the work and also by customers and employers; (iii) insecurity in financial status and social issues; social stigma like intergenerational

discrimination. Sanitary workers are not concentrating on their own health and nutritional status due to lack of awareness (Gomathi and Kamala, 2020, WHO, 2020).

Sanitation workers provide an essential public service that all too often comes at the cost of the health, safety and dignity of those same workers. This systematic literature review aims to comprehensively analyse and synthesize research conducted between 2008 and 2021, focusing on the socio-economic factors influencing Sanitary Workers. The review investigates working conditions, Occupational health hazards and the impact of government policies on the lives of Sanitary Workers.

### Objectives:

1. To Study socio-economic status of sanitary workers India.
2. To Study problems and challenges faced by Sanitary Workers in India.

### Need of the Study

It's crucial to conduct a research paper that focuses on the socio-economic aspects of sanitary workers in India by reviewing existing studies. This review allows us to bring together the findings and insights from previous research to shed light on common problems such as poor living conditions, low wages, health risks, and social discrimination experienced by sanitary workers nationwide. Through this thorough examination of existing literature, researchers can pinpoint areas where there's not enough information and areas that need more investigation. Additionally, this overview can lay the groundwork for creating policies and actions based on evidence to tackle the socio-economic difficulties and enhance the overall welfare of sanitary workers in India.

### Data and sources of data

For this study secondary data has been collected. From shodhganga, PubMed, JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Keywords such as "Sanitary Workers socio-economic Status," "and variations thereof were used. Boolean operators helped refine the search to ensure relevance. A total of 30 Research Paper we have reviewed for the research work.

### Research Methodology

The research paper is based on information collected from secondary sources after the detailed study. A systematic search was conducted using many Secondary databases including shodhganga, PubMed, JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar. Keywords such as "Sanitary Workers socio-economic Status," "and variations thereof were used. Boolean operators helped refine the search to ensure relevance. A total of 30 Research Paper we have reviewed for the research work.

### Literature Review

*L. Rayen and T. Nisee (2020).* This study examines the status and working conditions of sanitary workers in Tirunelveli Corporation. It uses a survey-based descriptive and analytical approach, with data collected from 460 sanitary workers. The study found that waste loaders and truck cabins have higher exposure to dust and bioaerosols, and workers face various hazards. The study suggests that waste collection services should be performed during cooler hours in tropical countries. The study finds education level a significant proportion (46.3%) of workers are illiterate, with higher illiteracy rates among temporary workers (53.1%), Community representation the SC (Scheduled Caste) community dominates in sanitary work, comprising 88.9% of workers, followed by the ST (Scheduled Tribe) community, majority of both permanent (76.3%) and temporary (58.1%) workers agree that they are provided with necessary instruments and facilities for their work. The study also highlights the need for proper facilities, legal protection, and financial assistance for sanitary workers.

*T. Balasubramanian and M. Pillai (2021).* The study examines the working conditions of sanitary workers in the Nagercoil Municipal Corporation. The survey-based descriptive and analytical study aimed to describe the status of sanitary workers and assess their working conditions. The primary data was collected from 500 sanitary workers, while secondary data was collected from available literature. The study found that waste workers are exposed to diverse toxic, mechanical, and infectious hazards, requiring sound mitigation measures. In tropical countries, it is better to perform summer waste collection services in early morning hours or at night when temperatures are cooler. Waste workers should be encouraged to take regular breaks and rest in cooler shades, where oral rehydration fluids can be given to refresh them. The study finds majority (43.50%) of permanent workers are illiterate, while

temporary workers have a higher proportion of primary level education, the SC (Scheduled Caste) community dominates in sanitary work, comprising 66.60% of workers, followed by ST (Scheduled Tribe) workers, majority of both permanent and temporary workers agree that they are provided with necessary equipment facilities for their work, most permanent workers work six days a week, while temporary workers typically work seven days a week. The study also highlights the importance of sanitation workers in maintaining public health and the challenges they face, such as physical demands and working in all weather conditions.

*N. Rajavel (2015).* The study aimed to analyse the socio-economic conditions, health problems, and life status of women sanitary workers in Thanjavur municipal corporation. The researcher used a descriptive research design and collected data through a semi-structured interview schedule and the WHOQOL-BREF instrument. The study found that majority of the respondents faced gender discrimination, had skin diseases, and were illiterate. There was a significant relationship between age and years of experience. The study concluded that women sanitary workers face adjustment problems due to their dual roles at work and home. The research findings indicate that women sanitary workers in Thanjavur municipal corporation face various challenges in their personal and professional lives. Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 41 to 49 years, and most of them are illiterate. Many of the women sanitary workers belong to the Scheduled Caste community, and a significant number of them are unmarried. Most of the respondents are not associated with any trade union, and they lack knowledge about the schemes of sanitation. The study also reveals that there is a significant relationship between age and the quality of life, while there is no significant relationship between the number of family members, income per month, and years of experience and the quality of life of the respondents.

*R. Selvamani and D. Rajan (2015).* The study examines the personal and family profiles of 154 dalit women sanitary workers in Tiruppur, India. The research employed a simple random sampling technique and used an interview schedule survey to gather data. The study found that most respondents are illiterate and have lower middle socioeconomic class. There is a significant difference between education and socioeconomic status, with illiterate respondents having a higher socioeconomic status. The study suggests that social work practice can improve the quality of life among women sanitary workers. The research findings on personal and family profiles of dalit women sanitary workers in Tiruppur, India, indicate that these women face significant socioeconomic challenges. More than 74% of the respondents did not have own toilet facilities, and most were married within 11-17 years. The majority of the respondents belonged to nuclear families, with a family monthly income of more than Rs. 30,000. More than 47% of the respondents were illiterate, and their spouses often used alcohol. Many of the women were living without their husbands and did not have a savings habit. The study also revealed that only 4% of respondent's family members completed post-graduation, and 34% of the respondents had more than 11-20 years of experience in their field. Overall, the research highlights the challenging socioeconomic conditions faced by dalit women sanitary workers in Tiruppur, India.

*A. Swarup and A. Gupta (2023).* The research paper aims to analyse the working conditions of Indian sanitation workers, particularly those from urban slums, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their existing normative model. The study relies on secondary data and focuses on the political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal aspects of the sanitation workers' working conditions. The researchers have reviewed existing government policies and frameworks, such as the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act of 2013, to make policy recommendations for the betterment of sanitation workers in India.

*G. Meena and T. Priyanka (2021).* The research discusses a study on the social service attitude of sanitary workers in Thoothukudi District. The study used a stratified random sampling method to select a sample size of 120. Various statistical techniques, such as percentage, chi-square test, ranking, and weighted average method, were implemented for analysis. The study focused on the gender and marital status of the sanitary workers, with results showing that 58% of the respondents were married and 42% were unmarried, majority of the respondents are female (54%), married (58%), and belong to the age group of 40 - 50 years (33%). The study also reveals that the majority of permanent, temporary, and contract sanitary workers are male (59%), female (55%), and male (51%), respectively. The research aims to analyse the awareness level of Covid19 among sanitary workers, their attitude and satisfaction level towards their work.

*P. Nanda (2020).* The research paper discusses the rights and working conditions of sanitation workers, particularly in the context of India. It highlights the need for proper safety equipment, fair wage scales, medical insurance, and special facilities for these workers. The text also mentions a 1971 WHO report that emphasized the importance of proper protection gears and cleaning equipment for workers during

natural disasters. The research paper discusses some statistics and facts related to sanitation workers in India, such as One manhole worker dies unblocking sewers by hand every five days in India, an estimated five million people in India are engaged in sanitation work, of which two million are likely to be engaged in 'high-risk' work such as cleaning sewers and septic tanks, the NGO Safai Karamchari Andolan has recorded close to 2000 sanitation worker deaths, the NGO has also recorded state-wise numbers of dry latrines and manual scavengers, which are also dreadful and shameful. The author recommends abolishing the practice of hiring sanitation workers as casual or contract laborers and providing them with insurance cover, provident fund benefits, and regulated wage scales.

*R. Tiwari (2008)*. The Research paper discusses the hazards faced by sewage and sanitary workers, primarily chemical and biological hazards. It mentions that these workers are exposed to different occupational noxious agents, which may lead to the development of chronic lung function changes. The engineering measure should focus on making the process more mechanistic, and these workers should benefit from occupational health services, including pre-placement and periodic health monitoring. Engineering, medical, and legislative measures can help in preventing these hazards. Additionally, the abolition of manual scavenging through effective implementation of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, can help protect these workers. Regular awareness programs should be conducted to educate them on safer work procedures and the use of personal protective equipment.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Status and Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Tirunelveli Corporation (L. Rayen and T. Nisee, 2020):**

In this research paper it has been identified that sanitary workers are significant exposure to dust and bioaerosols among waste loaders and truck cabin workers and they are high illiteracy rates, especially among temporary workers, SC community dominates in sanitary work, emphasizing the need for community representation, majority agree on necessary facilities, but improvements in legal protection and financial assistance are necessary.

### **2. Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Nagercoil Municipal Corporation (T. Balasubramanian and M. Pillai, 2021):**

In this research paper it has been identified that Sanitary workers face diverse hazards, suggesting the need for mitigation measures, illiteracy rates vary among permanent and temporary workers, with dominance of SC community and highlighted importance of sanitation workers in maintaining public health amidst challenges.

### **3. Socio-economic Conditions of Women Sanitary Workers in Thanjavur Municipal Corporation (N. Rajavel, 2015):**

In this research paper it has been identified that sanitary workers face Gender discrimination, illiteracy, and health issues prevalent among women sanitary workers and challenges faced due to dual roles at work and home, impacting quality of life and highlighted significant relationship between ages, years of experience, and quality of life.

### **4. Personal and Family Profiles of Dalit Women Sanitary Workers in Tiruppur, India (R. Selvamani and D. Rajan, 2015):**

In this research paper it has been identified that sanitary workers are illiteracy and lower middle socioeconomic class prevalent among respondents and socioeconomic status significantly influenced by education level and emphasized the potential of social work practice in improving quality of life.

### **5. Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Sanitation Workers (A. Swarup and A. Gupta, 2023):**

This research paper examined various aspects of working conditions and policy recommendations, particularly in urban slums and focused on existing government policies and frameworks for sanitation workers' welfare.

## 6. Social Service Attitude of Sanitary Workers in Thoothukudi District (G. Meena and T. Priyanka, 2021):

This research paper analysed gender, marital status, and COVID-19 awareness among sanitary workers and majority of the workers are married, with gender distribution varying among different worker types.

## 7. Rights and Working Conditions of Sanitation Workers in India (P. Nanda, 2020):

This research paper highlighted the need for safety equipment, fair wages, and insurance for sanitation workers and advocated for abolishing casual or contract labour and providing regulated wage scales.

## 8. Hazards Faced by Sewage and Sanitary Workers (R. Tiwari, 2008):

This research paper discussed chemical and biological hazards faced by workers and recommended preventive measures and emphasized the need for occupational health services and effective implementation of laws.

Overall, these research findings underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by sanitation workers, including health hazards, socio-economic vulnerabilities, and inadequate policy frameworks. The discussions highlight the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to improve the working conditions and welfare of sanitation workers in India.

## CONCLUSION

The research findings collectively illuminate the extensive challenges confronting sanitation workers in India, ranging from health risks to socio-economic disparities and insufficient policy support. High exposure to dust and bioaerosols, coupled with prevalent illiteracy rates, particularly among temporary workers, underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions to enhance working conditions. The dominance of the Scheduled Caste (SC) community in sanitation work emphasizes the necessity for community representation and equitable support measures.

Moreover, the significance of sanitation workers in upholding public health amidst diverse hazards is underscored, alongside the socio-economic struggles faced by Dalit women workers. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on sanitation workers and the advocacy for comprehensive policy frameworks further underscore the need for responsive and inclusive measures.

In conclusion, these findings emphasize the imperative for concerted efforts from policymakers, stakeholders, and society at large to address the multifaceted challenges faced by sanitation workers. Comprehensive interventions, including education, social support, occupational health services, and equitable policy frameworks, are crucial to ensure the well-being and dignity of these indispensable contributors to public health and sanitation.

## Reference

- [1]. Rayen, L. P., & Nisee, T. J. (2017). *A Study on the Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Tirunelveli Corporation. International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD), International Open Access Journal. ISSN-2456-6470.*
- [2]. Balasubramanian, T., & Pillai, M. J. (2021). *Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Nagercoil Municipal Corporation. Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research.*
- [3]. Rajavel, N. (2015). *Health Problems Faced by Women Sanitary Workers in Thanjavur Town - A Study. Indian Journal of Applied Research, ISSN-2249-555.*
- [4]. Selvamani, R. (2015). *Socio-Economic Status of Dalit Women Sanitary Workers: A Social Work Perspective. In Empowering People: Effective Social Work Approaches & Strategies (Special Issue Dec 2015, ISSN 2249-555).*
- [5]. Swarup, A., & Gupta, A. (2023). *Analysing the Working Conditions of Sanitation Workers with Special Reference to Urban Slum Dwellers in a Post COVID-19 Reality. International Journal of Policy Sciences and Law, Volume 1, Issue 1.*
- [6]. Meena, G., & Priyanka, T. (2021). *Awareness and Attitude among the Sanitary Workers of Thoothukudi District during Covid 19. International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), Volume 9, Issue 9. ISSN: 2320-2882.*
- [7]. Tiwari, R. R. (2008). *Occupational Health Hazards in Sewage and Sanitary Workers. Indian Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 12(3), December.*
- [8]. Nanda, P. (2020). *White Paper - Are sanitation workers of our country protected? Written for Citizens of Justice and Peace.*