



## **A Study on the Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Tirunelveli Corporation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Sanitation falls under the preventive type of public health. It is also another monopoly function to be under taken by the municipality. Sanitation includes removal of rubbish, sludge, night soil and dead animal's controls of tilies and mosquitos, drain drainage and sweeping. Prevention is better than cure "an improvement is general sanitation in the inhabited areas of the cities and towns to provide salutary". The findings revealed that sanitation workers undergo several problems both physically and mentally. The problems in work place can be solved by providing equal rights as other government employees. Discrimination and stigmatization in work place and society shows that the people need more development in grounds of humanity and respect. Uplifting the underprivileged in terms of education, rights, power and employment improves the growth of the country. Providing safety measures for sanitation workers, conducting regular medical camps, prevention of manual scavenging, creating awareness about government schemes will definitely improve their quality of life. Social Workers can be appointed to provide psychosocial help to the sanitation workers.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Our atmospheres of living are a matter of view of controlling of large part of the preventable ill health. Sanitary workers have played an important role in improving the urban and semi-urban ecological environment and the urban modern civilization, meeting the needs of people's desires for physical, spiritual, political, ecological civilization and implementing the social sustainable development. A sanitation worker has a dirty job, but it's one that most

communities can't live without. Sanitation workers perform a valuable service to their communities collecting garbage and removing it to proper disposal areas such as dumps or landfills. They go by many names: garbage man, trash man. A sanitation worker must be physically fit, so he can quickly climb in and out of large trucks and lift heavy trash containers. The job is physically demanding. Sanitation workers routinely lift heavy objects and work in all weather conditions. There is also a significant injury risk associated with the job. During natural and manmade disasters, sanitation workers participate in emergency response and cleanup. Sanitation Workers are required to work rotating shifts, rotating days off, nights, Saturdays, Sundays, holidays and mandatory overtime.

Sanitation workers mostly carry out their work in unsafe working conditions without protective gears or other safety gears or other safety devices. Death or serious injury to sanitation workers while cleaning sewerage with no or inadequate safeguards are frequent incidents. Those people are exposed to dangerous toxic and harmful substances. But this problem is not adequately addressed in the legal framework. The high court of Gujarat once made some comments in support of these workers' life, health and dignity. "The sewerage workers are the citizens of this country and they are entitled to enjoy fundamental right as provided in the Constitution of India. It is a cardinal principle of the service jurisprudence that the employer has to take adequate care of the safety and well being of his employee. He cannot expose and employee performing duties which are dangerous in nature and likely to adversely affect his health or life. Hence it is the

employer who should provide him with all the safety measures and if he is not able to make such provision, he has to refrain from asking such employee to discharge these duties.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To study the nature of job of the sanitary workers.
- To study the working condition of sanitary workers.

### REVIEW OF LITRATURE

**Chellamma, P et al (2015)<sup>1</sup>** conducted a cross sectional morbidity study among all sanitation workers corporation area. They studied the morbidity profile of sanitary workers in Thrissur Corporation, Kerala and to study the treatment seeking behavior in these persons. They were interviewed using pre tested structured schedule. Workers were interviewed after obtaining informed consent. Among 601 workers 53.6% were males. 34.4% workers presented with one acute illness and only 79.2% sought medical help. 43.26% had chronic morbidities and 83.86 % opted modern medicine. 53.9% of the workers were provided with personal protective equipments and regular use was seen in 18%. Acute illness had significant association with male gender, low education status, large family size, absence of provision of personal protective equipments. Chronic morbidities were associated with males, and elderly group and daily wage workers

**Sherin., et al (2017)<sup>2</sup>** The sanitation workers at Sengulam Colony at Tiruchirappalli comprises the universe for the present study. The data were collected from sixty respondents through purposive sampling technique. A self-prepared interview schedule was used to collect the data from the respondents. The findings revealed that 63 per cent were harassed by their supervisors. 55% reported that they have experienced discrimination in the society. 68 per cent consume alcohol. 70 per cent had several health issues such as gastrointestinal diseases, orthopedic, skin related issues, asthma. Providing special medical camps, safety measures and strong welfare schemes is the only source to improve their quality of life. Lack of sanitation

<sup>1</sup> Chellamma P, Sudhiraj, Arya Vijayakumar, Morbidity profile of sanitary workers in Thrissur corporation, Kerala, 2015.

Retrieved <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290213148>.

<sup>2</sup> Sherin sophia and pavithra "A study on sanitary workers in Tiruchirappalli" *International Journal of Applied Research* 2017; 3(4): 168-170

workers in a society, higher would be the level of diseases and mortality.

**France Ncube et al. (2016)<sup>3</sup>** the study found high mean exposure concentrations for total dust, Gram-negative bacteria (GNB), and fungi for personal samples collected from refuse bin loaders and for truck cabin samples. This suggests the priority for exposure assessment with regard to total dust and bioaerosols should be focused on waste loaders and the truck cabins. Also, we observed mean summer temperatures higher than 33°C in most waste management areas and workers complained of headaches, sunburn, heat stress, excessive sweating, dehydration, and difficulties in concentration in assigned tasks. Consequently our study argues that in tropical countries it is better to perform summer waste collection services in early morning hours or at night when temperatures are cooler. Our study concludes that municipal solid waste workers are exposed to diverse toxic, mechanical and infectious hazards requiring sound mitigation measures.

### METHODOLOGY:

This study is basically a survey based descriptive and analytical study aimed at describing the status of the sanitary workers in the study area and to assess the working conditions of sanitary workers. Adequate sample size was used taking into account the size of the population in the study area. The required data is collected from the respondents using a structured interview schedule.

### DATA COLLECTION:

The primary data was collected from the 460 sanitary workers working in the Tirunelveli Corporation. The secondary data were collected from available literature in books journals, research reports, and other published materials pertaining to the working women in India, particularly meant for the sanitary workers.

### Gender wise classification of Sanitary Workers

Permanent and temporary sanitary workers of different gender groups such as male and female have been working in the sanitary work. The following table shows the gender wise classification of permanent and temporary sanitary workers in Tirunelveli Corporation.

<sup>3</sup> France Ncube, Esper Jacobeth Ncube, and Kuku Voyi "Bioaerosols, Noise, and Ultraviolet Radiation Exposures for Municipal Solid Waste Handlers". *Journal of Environmental and Public Health* Volume 2017, Article ID 3081638, 8 page

**Table 1****Gender wise Classification of Sanitary Workers**

Sl. No	Gender	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	Male	82(27.3)	99(61.9)	181(39.3)
2.	Female	218(72.7)	61(38.1)	279(60.7)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

The above Table 1 explains about the gender of the respondents. 60.7 per cent of the respondents are female and the remaining 39.3 per cent of the respondents are male. Among the permanent workers, 72.7 per cent of the respondents are female and 27.3 per cent of the respondents are male. Among the temporary workers, 61.9 per cent of the respondents are male the remaining 38.1 per cent of the respondents are female. Women sanitary workers are more than the male sanitary workers in the sample population.

**Age wise Classification of Sanitary Workers**

Age is an important factor with respect to work. Age is more significant among females as generally their role also changes with their age. The household responsibilities and family status change with age. Experience and efficiency can also be related to age. The age wise classification of permanent and temporary sanitary workers is presented in the Table 2

**Table 2****Age wise Classification of Sanitary Workers**

Sl. No	Age	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	18-28	13(4.3)	21(13.1)	34(7.4)
2.	29-39	35(11.7)	76(47.5)	111(24.1)
3.	40-49	131(43.7)	38(23.8)	169(36.7)
4.	50-59	110(36.7)	17(10.6)	127(27.6)

5.	Above 59	11(3.6)	8(5.0)	19(4.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

The Table 2 above shows the age profile of the sample respondents. 36.7 per cent of workers belong to the age group of 40-49 years. 27.6 per cent of the sample respondents are in the age group of 50- 59. Among the permanent sanitary workers 43.7 per cent of them belong to the age group of 40-49 and 36.7 per cent of them belong to the age group of 50-59 years. Among the temporary sanitary workers 47.5 per cent of them belong to the age group of 29-39 and 23.8 per cent of them belong to the age group of 40-49 years.

**Educational Qualification wise classification of Sanitary Workers**

Education plays a major role in the overall development of any family and society. The educational qualification is classified as illiterates, primary, middle, high school and higher secondary. The educational qualification of the sample respondents is given in the Table 3 below.

**Table 3****Educational Qualification wise Classification of Sanitary Workers**

Sl. No	Education Qualification	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	Illiterate	128(42.7)	85(53.1)	213(46.3)
2.	Primary Education	91(30.3)	29(18.1)	120(26.1)
3.	Middle School	50(16.7)	19(11.9)	69(15)
4.	High School	25(8.3)	17(10.6)	42(9.1)
5.	Higher Secondary	6(2.0)	10(6.3)	16(3.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Table 3 shows that there is a higher share (46.3 per cent) of sanitary workers coming under the classification of illiterates and 26.1 per cent of the respondents up to primary school. Among the permanent sanitary workers 42.7 per cent of them are illiterates and 30.3 per cent of them are having primary education. Among the temporary sanitary workers 53.1 per cent of them are illiterates and 18.1 per cent of them are having primary education. It is clearly evident that the majority (46.3 per cent) of the sample respondents who are doing the sanitary work are illiterates.

### Community wise Classification of Sanitary Workers

In the present study it is observed that the occupations are not fully community based. But the concentration of certain communities in certain occupations could be widely noticed. The following Table 4 explains the distribution of respondents according to community.

**Table 4**

### Community wise classification of Sanitary Workers

Sl. No	Community	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	ST	30(10)	21(13.1)	51(11.1)
2.	SC	270(90)	139(86.9)	409(88.9)
3.	BC	-	-	-
4.	MBC	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Table 4 shows that the respondents belong to SC community dominates (88.9 per cent) in the sanitary work followed by ST (11.1 per cent). It is noted that the scheduled caste and schedule tribe constitute 100 per cent of the total sample population. The above table 4 shows that among the permanent sanitary workers, 90 per cent belongs to SC and 10 per cent belong to the ST community. Among the temporary sanitary workers, 86.9 per cent belongs to SC and 13.1 per cent are belongs to the ST community. The above analysis clearly shows that majority (88.9 per cent) of the workers involved in sanitary work belongs to SC and ST communities.

### Number of years in the Present Occupation

The years of service plays an important role in any occupation. The following Table 5 shows the number of years the permanent and temporary sanitary workers in the present occupation.

**Table 5**

### Number of years in the Present Occupation

Sl. No	Number of years in the present occupation	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	Less than one year	36(12)	10(6.3)	46(10)
2.	Two years	40(13.3)	30(18.8)	70(15.2)
3.	Three years	53(17.7)	28(17.5)	81(17.6)
4.	Four years	78(26)	19(11.9)	97(21.1)
5.	Above four years	93(31)	73(45.6)	166(36.1)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Among the 460 sample respondents 36.1 per cent of the sample respondents have above four years in the present occupation. Those workers who have experience less than one year is only 10 per cent where as 21.1 per cent of the workers have an experience of four years. Workers having an experience of three years are around 17.6 per cent in this sanitary work. Among the 300 sample permanent sanitary workers, majority of 31 per cent of the sample respondents have above four years in the present occupation. Among the 160 sample temporary sanitary workers, majority of 45.6 per cent of the sample respondents have above four years in the present occupation. The higher share of workers with above four years of experience denotes the stability of the work.



## Appointment of Sanitary Workers

The following Table 6 shows the appointment of permanent and temporary sanitary workers in their job.

**Table 6**  
**Appointment of Sanitary Workers**

Sl. No	Appointment of Sanitary Workers	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	Municipality	300(100)	-	300(65.2)
2.	Contractor	-	47(29.4)	47(10.2)
3.	Self help group/NGO	-	113(70.6)	113(24.6)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Table 6 clearly shows that 65.2 per cent of the sample respondents have been appointed by Municipal Corporation. 24.6 per cent of the sample respondents have been appointed by self help group/NGO. Among the 300 permanent sanitary workers, 100 per cent of the sample respondents had appointed by municipality. Among the 160 temporary sanitary workers 70.6 per cent of the sample respondents had appointed by self help group/NGO and 29.4 per cent of the sample respondents had appointed by contractor.

## Numbers of Working Days

The following Table 7 shows the number of days the sanitary workers are working in a week.

**Table 7**  
**Numbers of Working Days**

Sl. No	Numbers of days	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	Less than 5 days	-	-	-
2.	6 days	255(85)	37(23.1)	292(63.5)
3.	7 days	45(15)	123(76.9)	168(36.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Table 7 shows that out of 460 sample respondents, majority of 63.5 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work 6 days in a week. 36.5 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work on all the days in a week. Table 7 further shows that out of the total 300 sample permanent sanitary workers, majority of 85 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work 6 days in a week and 15 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work 7 days in a week. Table 7 reveals that out of the total 160 sample temporary sanitary workers, majority of 76.9 per cent of the sample respondents go for work on all the days in a week and 23.1 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work 6 days in a week.

## Numbers of Hours Work in a day

The following Table 8 shows the number of hours work in a day by the sanitary workers.

**Table 8**

## Numbers of Hours Work in a day

Sl. No	Numbers of hours work in a day	Permanent Workers	Temporary Workers	Total
1.	7-8 hours	155(51.7)	97(60.6)	252(54.8)
2.	9-10 hours	133(44.3)	45(28.1)	178(38.7)
3.	More than 10 hours	12(4.0)	18(11.3)	30(6.5)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300(100)</b>	<b>160(100)</b>	<b>460(100)</b>

Source: Primary Data

Table 8 shows that out of the total 460 sample respondents, majority of 54.8 per cent of the sample respondents are working 7 to 8 hours in a day and 38.7 per cent of the sample respondents are working 9 to 10 hours in a day. Table 8 further shows that out of the total 300 sample permanent sanitary workers, majority of 51.7 per cent of the sample respondents are working 7 to 8 hours in a day and 44.3 per cent of the sample respondents are working 9 to 10 hours in a day. Table 8 reveals that out of the total 160 sample temporary sanitary workers, majority of 60.6 per cent of the sample respondents are working 7 to 8 hours in a day

and 28.1 per cent of the sample respondents are working 9 to 10 hours in a day.

### Nature of Work performed by the Permanent Sanitary Workers

Permanent sanitary workers are doing different kind of work such as sewage cleaning, street sweeping, waste collection from door to door, septic tank cleaning, sewage removal and disposal of dead animals. In order to find out which kind of work is done by the permanent sanitary workers, Garret ranking analysis was made. The result of garret ranking analysis is presented in the Table 9

**Table 9**

### Nature of Work performed by the Permanent Sanitary Workers

Sl. No	Kind of Work	Total Score	Average Score	Rank
1.	Sewage cleaning	16494	54.98	IV
2.	Street sweeping	20081	66.94	I
3.	Waste collection from door to door	16887	56.29	III
4.	Septic tank cleaning	14148	47.16	V
5.	Sewage removal	11159	37.19	VI
6.	Disposal of dead animals	18115	60.38	II

Source: Computed Data

It is clear from the Table 9 that majority of the permanent sanitary workers have given the first rank to street sweeping. The Table 9 indicates that the sample permanent sanitary workers have given second rank to disposal of dead animals. The third rank was given for the waste collection from door to door.

### Nature of Work Performed by the Temporary Sanitary Workers

Temporary sanitary workers are doing different kind of work such as sewage cleaning, street sweeping, waste collection from door to door, septic tank cleaning, sewage removal and disposal of dead animals. In order to find out the kind of work is done by temporary

sanitary workers, Garret ranking analysis was made. The result of garret ranking analysis is presented in the Table 10

**Table 10**

### Nature of Work Performed by the Temporary Sanitary Workers

Sl. No	Kind of Work	Total Score	Average Score	Rank
1.	Sewage cleaning	7919	49.49	IV
2.	Street sweeping	10238	63.99	I
3.	Waste collection from door to door	9977	62.36	II
4.	Septic tank cleaning	8280	51.75	III
5.	Sewage removal	6356	39.73	V
6.	Disposal of dead animals	4910	30.69	VI

Source: Computed Data

It is clear from the Table 10 that majority of the temporary sanitary workers have given the first rank to street sweeping. The Table 10 indicates that the sample temporary sanitary workers have given second rank to waste collection from door to door. The Table 10 further indicates that the sample temporary sanitary workers have given the third rank to septic tank cleaning. It is further clear from the Table that the sample temporary sanitary workers have given the last rank to disposal of dead animals.

### Kind of facilities Provided to Permanent Sanitary Workers

There are different kinds of facilities provided for permanent sanitary workers such as uniform, instruments and safety clothes. The kind of facilities provided to permanent sanitary workers for doing the work is presented in the Table 11.

**Table 11**

**Kind of facilities Provided to Permanent Sanitary Workers**

Facilities	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Uniform	181 (60.3)	98 (32.7)	7 (2.3)	10 (3.3)	4 (1.3)	300 (100)
Instruments	229 (76.3)	52 (17.3)	6 (2.0)	11 (3.7)	2 (0.7)	300 (100)
Safety clothes	227 (75.7)	33 (11.0)	18 (6.0)	19 (6.3)	3 (1.0)	300 (100)

Source: Primary Data

Table 11 clearly shows that out of the total 300 sample permanent sanitary workers, majority (76.3 per cent) of the sample respondents are strongly agree that they have provided instruments facilities for doing their work and 75.7 per cent of the sample respondents are strongly agree that they have been provided safety clothes for doing their work.

**Kind of Facilities Provided to Temporary Sanitary Workers**

There are different kinds of facilities provided for temporary sanitary workers such as uniform, instruments and safety clothes. The kind of facilities provided to temporary sanitary workers for doing the work is presented in the Table 12

**Table 12**

**Kind of Facilities Provided to Temporary Sanitary Workers**

Facilities	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Uniform	41(25.6)	90(56.3)	1(0.6)	23(14.4)	5(3.1)	160(100)
Instruments	42(26.3)	93(58.1)	4(2.5)	4(2.5)	17(10.6)	160(100)

Safety clothes	4(2.5)	12(7.5)	5(3.1)	60(37.5)	79(49.4)	160(100)
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Source: Primary Data

Table 12 clearly shows that out of the total 160 sample temporary sanitary workers, majority (58.1 per cent) of the sample respondents agree that they have provided instruments facilities for doing their work, 56.3 per cent of the sample respondents agree that they have provided uniform for doing their work, 49.4 per cent of the sample respondents strongly disagree that they have provided safety clothes for doing their work and 14.4 per cent of the sample respondent disagree that they have provided uniform for doing their work and 10.6 per cent of the sample respondents strongly disagree that they have been provided instruments facilities for doing their work.

**FINDINGS:**

- Among the permanent sanitary workers, 72.7 per cent of the respondents are female and 27.3 per cent of the respondents are male. Among the temporary sanitary workers, 61.9 per cent of the respondents are male and the remaining 38.1 per cent of the respondents are female. Women participation in sanitary work is higher than the male participation.
- It is identified that among the permanent sanitary workers, only 4.3 per cent of the workers are in the age group of 18 to 28 years, 43.7 per cent of the respondents are in the age group of 40-49 years and among the temporary sanitary workers, above 59 years are very low in percentage. On the other hand majority (47.5 per cent) of the respondents are under the age group of 28-39 years.
- Majority (46.3%) of the respondents are illiterates. It is found that among the permanent sanitary workers, majority (42.7%) of the respondents are illiterates and among the temporary workers, majority (53.1%) of the respondents are illiterates. This clearly shows that illiterate people prefer this job.
- It is found that the SC community dominates (88.9%) in the sanitary work followed by ST (11.1%). It is identified that among the permanent sanitary workers, 90 per cent are belonging to SC and 10 per cent are belonging to the ST community. Among the temporary sanitary workers, 86.9 per cent are belonging to SC and 13.1 per cent are

belonging to the ST community. The analysis clearly shows that majority of the workers involved in sanitary work belongs to SC and ST communities.

- It is found that among the 300 sample permanent sanitary workers, majority (31 per cent) of the sample respondents have above four years in the present occupation. Among the 160 sample temporary sanitary workers, majority of 45.6 per cent of the sample respondents have above four years in the present occupation. The higher share of workers with above four years of experience denotes the stability of the work.
- Among the permanent sanitary workers, 100 per cent of the sample respondents have been appointed by the municipality. Among the temporary sanitary workers, majority of 70.6 per cent of the sample respondents had appointed by self help group/NGO.
- Among the sample permanent sanitary workers, majority of 85 per cent of the sample respondents go for the work 6 days in a week and among the sample temporary sanitary workers, majority (76.9 per cent) of the sample respondents go for the work 7 days in a week.
- It is found that among the sample permanent sanitary workers, majority (51.7 per cent) of the sample respondents are working 7 to 8 hours in a day and among the sample temporary sanitary workers, majority (60.6 per cent) of the sample respondents are working 7 to 8 hours in a day.
- It is found that among different kind of work done by the permanent sanitary workers, street sweeping and disposal of dead animals are ranked to be the most important ones. Waste collection from door to door and sewage removal is the next important kind of work doing by the permanent sanitary workers.
- It is found that among different kind of work done by the temporary sanitary workers, street sweeping and waste collection from door to door are ranked to be the most important ones. Septic tank cleaning and disposal of dead animals are the next important kind of work done by the temporary sanitary workers.
- It is found that among the permanent sanitary workers, majority (76.3 per cent) of the sample respondents strongly agree that they have provided instruments facilities for doing their work and among the sample temporary sanitary workers,

majority (58.1 per cent) of the sample respondents agree that they have been provided instruments facilities for doing their work.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- Special medical assistance may be given to the sanitary workers which may be useful to improve their health condition.
- The sanitary workers should be aware of legal protection. For that they may be allowed to attend legal awareness camps.
- The government should provide loan with low rate of interest for meeting the family expenses which could be deducted from their salary because the private loans carry high rate of interest.
- Decent salary with other benefits like D.A, P.F., H.R.A., pension need to be assured for the workers.
- Government may provide opportunities for their children to get admitted in the educational institutions for getting the higher education.
- Government must provide equipment and mechanical devices for removing the garbage and for cleaning the sewerages.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The findings reveal the nature of work done by the sanitary workers. The study also shows the working conditions of the sanitary workers. The problems in work place can be solved by providing equal rights like other government employees. Discrimination and stigmatization in work place and society reveals the steps to be taken by the government to uplift the sanitary workers socially. Uplifting the underprivileged in terms of education, rights, power and employment will improve the status of the sanitary workers. Providing safety measures for sanitation workers, conducting regular medical camps, prevention of manual scavenging, creating awareness about government schemes will definitely improve the quality of life of the sanitary workers.