



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

A STUDY ON COST OF LIVING AND REAL INCOME OF ROAD SWEEPERS IN MAYILADUTHURAI TOWN

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ABSTRACT

Sweepers are a necessary component of life and assist us with a variety of tasks. They do provide all citizens with additional help. They owe a great obligation of gratitude to the elderly, young people, and working adults for their services. They only make everyone's lives a little bit simpler while leading challenging lives themselves. The arduous work they do causes their bodies to function constantly. To meet the demands of cleanliness, their day begins much earlier than those of the general public. Despite the difficulty of their work, they nevertheless do it for us. Since they have made such a significant contribution to society, they should be treated with the utmost respect and honor. The municipality is in charge of operating the sweeper system in our country. A sweeper is dispatched to monitor each area's cleanliness. Villages that lack access to modern amenities like banks or transportation infrastructure still exist today, but they do have sweepers to keep their roads and land clean. It would not be difficult to say that no life is truly possible without sweepers if this were understood properly. The smell of garbage will prevent us from breathing in our houses.

Keywords: Sweepers, Life-style, Income pattern, etc.

INTRODUCTION

On 2nd October 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission was launched throughout length and breadth of the country as a national movement. "A clean India would be the best tribute India could pay to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary in 2019. Times from last decade in country could be counted as golden age for satisfaction in India. What started out as the total sanitation campaign in 1990's morphed into the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan under the UPA government and then transferred into the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan with full force by the Prime Minister's special attention. Sanitation workers still faces multifaceted challenges like mode of employment, low wages, and health hazards. In 2010, the ILO reported that there were around 52.6 million individuals engaged in such work. It's important to highlight those women and girls form a substantial majority among these workers. According to the International Labor Organization, sweepers are vulnerable to a range of health issues, such as influenza, cough, eye irritation, skin rashes, digestive problems, chronic cough, and eye diseases. Sweepers are among the lowest paid workers and many are employed on a part time, contractual or informal basis. Maximum of sweepers in India is on contractual basis rather than government basis. Now all big type of institutes private/ government hire people for cleaning and sweeping activities. The sweepers are doing their work in both morning and evening shifts for long durations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Sweepers help us with a multitude of activities and are an essential part of life. They do offer further assistance to all citizens. The elderly, children and working adults owe them a significant debt of appreciation for their services. They lead difficult lives themselves and very somewhat make everyone's lives easier. Their bodies labor continually due to the strenuous task they conduct. Their day starts much earlier than that of the general public in order to meet the requirements of cleanliness. They still perform this labor for us despite its difficulty. They deserve the utmost respect and admiration because of the enormous contribution they have made to society. Hence, in this study made attempt to understand the cost of living and real income of road sweepers in Mayiladuthurai town.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study. They are

1. To study the demographic profile of the road sweepers in the study area.
2. To understand the socio-economic status of road sweepers in Mayiladuthurai town.
3. To identify the problems faced by the road sweepers in the study area.
4. To offer suitable suggestions based on the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Mayiladuthurai town has been selected for the purpose of primary data collection. To carry out the objectives, the researcher has used both primary and secondary data. The secondary data and information have been collected from various sources like newspapers, journals, magazines, and publications, etc. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire from the road sweepers. The census method is to be adopted in this study. The primary and secondary data collected from different sources have been tabulated and interpreted meaningfully. The information has been represented using bar charts, pie diagrams, graphical method etc.

DETAILS OF SAMPLE SIZE

Area wise & Operation wise	Sample size
Thiruvilandur	29
Koranad	23
Mayiladuthurai	15
AFS	7
Total	74

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In a study of this magnitude though, meticulous care has been taken in each and every aspect of study. Certain limitations are likely to be there in the study.

1. The study taken only road sweepers in the Mayiladuthurai town
2. A few respondents were hesitant to give details.
3. There might be a sense of bias crept in answers given by the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1
GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

S.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Male	32	43.24%
2	Female	42	56.76%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 1 shows that 56.76% of the respondents are belongs to the female and 43.24% of the respondents are male.

TABLE 2
AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Below 30 years	07	9.46%
2	31 to 45 years	33	44.59%
3	46 to 60 years	26	35.14%
4	Above 60 years	08	10.81%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 2 depicts that out of 74 respondents, 9.46% belonged to age category of upto 30 years, 44.59% belonged to the age category of 31 to 45 years, 35.14% of customer belonged to the age category of 46 to 60 years and 10.81% pertaining to the age category of above 60 years.

TABLE 3
EDUCATION WISE CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

S.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Illiterate	06	8.11%
2	Upto SSLC	40	54.05%
3	HSC	28	37.84%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table 3, it can be inferred that 54% of the respondents are studied upto SSLC, 37.84% of the respondents are completed HSC, 14% representing the other, and only 8% of the respondents are come under the category of Illiterate.

TABLE 4
MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Married	47	63.51%
2	Unmarried	27	36.49%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 3 noticed that 63.51% of the respondents are married and the remaining 36.49% are got unmarried.

TABLE 5
MONTHLY INCOME OF RESPONDENTS

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Upto Rs. 5,000	12	16.21%
2	Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 7,500	39	52.70%
3	Above Rs. 7,500	23	31.09%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table 5, we came to know that 52% of the respondents were received their monthly income between Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 7,500, followed by 31% of the respondents earning their monthly more than Rs. 7,500 per month and the rest 16% of respondents were earned their monthly upto Rs.5,000.

TABLE 6
FAMILY SIZE OF RESPONDENTS

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Upto 3	15	20.28%
2	4 to 6	48	64.86%
3	Above 6	11	14.86%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the above table 6, it is clear that near 65% of respondents family contains 4 to 6 members, 20% of respondents were come upto 3 members family and 15% of respondents family consist of above 6 members.

TABLE 7
TYPE OF FAMILY

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Nuclear	56	75.67%
2	Joint	18	24.33%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 7 illustrate the type of family of the respondents, it was observed from the table, 75.67% of the respondents are belonged to the Nuclear family and the rest 24.33% of the respondents are belonged to the joint family.

TABLE 8
NATURE OF EMPLOYMENT

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Full-Time	21	28.38%
2	Part-Time	53	71.62%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table it was inferred that out of 74 respondents, majority 71.62% of the respondents opined that they work partly in the cleaning activities, they do other work such as flower selling, fruits and vegetables selling, etc for improving the cost of living and it was noted that only 28.38% of the respondents engaged fully in the cleaning activities in the study area.

TABLE 9
HOURS WORKING PER DAY

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	2 Hours	13	17.57%
2	2 to 4 Hours	42	56.76%
3	More than 4 Hours	19	25.67%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the above clearly shows the working hours per day, it was noted from the table majority of the workers (56%) spent 2 to 4 hours per day, followed by 25% of the workers spent more than 4 hours per day and only 18% of the workers spent below 2 hours per day.

TABLE 10
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	In %
1	Below 5 years	10	13.51%
2	5 to 8 years	18	24.32%
3	8 to 10 years	28	37.84%
4	Above 10 years	18	24.32%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the above table it was inferred that out of 74 respondents 37% of the workers having 8 to 10 years' experience, followed by 24.32% of the respondents having more than 10 years' and 5 to 8 years' experience in the field of cleaning activities respectively only 13% of the workers are having below 5 years' experience.

TABLE 11
SUFFER OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	In %
1	Yes	65	87.83%
2	No	09	12.17%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table it shows the suffer occupational diseases, it was observed from the table majority (87.83%) of the workers suffered occupational diseases and the rest were not suffer such occupational diseases.

TABLE 12
NATURE OF WORK

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	In %
1	Manual Scavengers	21	28.38%
2	Sewer workers	12	16.22%
3	Street sweepers	28	37.84%
4	Waste collectors	13	17.56%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the nature of work done by sweepers in the study area, it was inferred from the table 28 respondents are belonged to the category of street sweepers, followed by 21 respondents are manual scavengers, followed by 13 respondents are waste collectors and 12 respondents are sewer workers.

TABLE 13
PROBLEMS FACED

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	In %
1	Disrespect in the society	08	10.81%
2	Health issues	21	28.38%
3	Work burden	17	22.97%
4	Economic issues	20	27.03%
5	Others	08	10.81%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the problems faced by the sweepers in the study area, it was observed from the table, 28.38% of the respondents are opined that they are facing health issues like skin allergy, rashes, etc., followed by 27% of the respondents said economic issues is the major problem, 22.97% of the respondents said that they facing over work burden by the supervisors, 10.81% of respondents are said disrespect in the society and others respectively.

TABLE 14
TYPE OF DISEASE AFFECTED

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	In %
1	Musculoskeletal disorders	6	8.11%
2	Respiratory problems	18	24.32%
3	Skin conditions	31	41.89%
4	Eye problems	10	13.52%
5	Other health issues	9	12.16%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the type of disease affected during cleaning activities in the study area, it was inferred from the table out of 74 respondents 31 were opined that they affect skin problems during cleaning process, followed by 18 respondents were opined respiratory issues, 10 respondents were opined eye problems, 9 were said other health issues and 6 respondents were opined that they affect musculoskeletal disorders during the cleaing process in the study area.

TABLE 15
IS MONTHLY INCOME HELPFUL FOR RUNNING FAMILY

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Strongly agree	0	-
2	Agree	4	5.41%
3	Neutral	15	20.27%
4	Disagree	27	36.49%
5	Strongly disagree	28	37.83%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the monthly income of the sweepers is sufficient for meet out their family, Out of 74 sweepers, Majority 55 respondents (both Strongly disagree and Disagree) are opined negatively that they are very sad to operate their family due to poor income, followed by 15 respondents opined that they are neutrally satisfied, 4 respondents were agree, they fulfil the obligation of running their family their income is sufficient and it was noted no one respondents opined strongly agree because their income is not helpful for running the family.

TABLE 16
IS MONTHLY INCOME HELPFUL FOR CHILDREN EDUCATION

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Strongly agree	0	-
2	Agree	10	13.51%
3	Neutral	24	32.43%
4	Disagree	14	18.92%
5	Strongly disagree	26	35.14%
Total		100	100%

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the monthly income of the sweepers is sufficient for meeting out the children education, it was observed from the table no one is opined strongly agree because of the income level of the sweepers, followed by 10 were agreed the statement, 24 respondents neutrally agree the statement, 14 were disagree the income is not sufficient to meet out the children education and it was noted that 26 respondents opined that they strongly disagree the monthly income is not sufficient to meet out the children education.

TABLE 17
IS MONTHLY INCOME HELPFUL FOR FOOD

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Strongly agree	8	10.81%
2	Agree	17	22.97%
3	Neutral	20	27.03%
4	Disagree	10	13.51%
5	Strongly disagree	19	25.68%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the monthly income of the sweepers is sufficient for food, it was observed from the table 27.03% of the respondents opined neutrally they neither agree or disagree the statement, followed by 25.68% of the respondents opined that they strongly disagree, 22.97% respondents were opined agree, 13.51% were disagree and 10.81% were strongly agree the monthly income is sufficient for their essential need food expenditure.

TABLE 3.18
IS MONTHLY INCOME HELPFUL FOR HEALTHCARE

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Strongly agree	3	4.05%
2	Agree	10	13.51%
3	Neutral	16	21.62%
4	Disagree	20	27.03%
5	Strongly disagree	25	33.79%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the monthly income of the sweepers is sufficient for healthcare expenditures, Out of 74 respondents, 25 respondents are strongly disagree, followed by 20 were disagree the monthly income is not sufficient for meeting the healthcare expenditure but in some respondents strongly agree and agree the monthly income is sufficient for healthcare and 16 respondents were neutrally accepted the above statement.

TABLE 19
IS MONTHLY INCOME HELPFUL FOR UTILITY BILLS

Sl.No	Factors	Respondents	
		in No.	in %
1	Strongly agree	0	-
2	Agree	16	21.62%
3	Neutral	20	27.03%
4	Disagree	18	18.92%
5	Strongly disagree	20	21.62%
Total		74	100%

Source: Primary data

From the table shows the monthly income of the sweepers is sufficient for paying utility bills, it was interpreted from the table no one is opined strongly agree because they said that their income is very low, of these they spent Food, healthcare, travelling, etc. followed by 20 were neutrally accepted, 16 respondents agree the monthly income is sufficient for utility bills, 18 were disagree and 20 respondents were strongly disagree that the monthly income is not sufficient for paying utility bills viz., EB bill, Gas, Cable, etc.,

FINDINGS

- It is understood from the above analysis that most of the respondents taken in to study are female.
- This analysis clearly reveals the most of the sample respondents i.e., 44.59% are representing the age category of 31 to 45 years.
- 54% of the respondents are studied upto SSLC, 37.84% of the respondents are completed HSC.
- This reveals that a vast majority of the respondents are taken for the study is married.
- 52% of the respondents were received their monthly income between Rs. 5,001 to Rs. 7,500.
- The above analysis reveals that majority of the respondents (65%) family contains 4 to 6 members
- This analysis clearly envisage that most of the sweepers are in the study area belonged to the nuclear family
- out of 74 respondents, majority 71.62% of the respondents opined that they work partly in the cleaning activities
- it was noted from the table majority of the workers (56%) spent 2 to 4 hours per day
- out of 74 respondents 37% of the workers having 8 to 10 years' experience
- 13% of the workers are having below 5 years' experience
- it was observed from the table majority (87.83%) of the workers suffered occupational diseases and the rest were not suffer such occupational diseases.
- it was inferred from the table 28 respondents are belonged to the category of street sweepers
- 28.38% of the respondents are opined that they are facing health issues like skin allergy, rashes, etc.,
- out of 74 respondents 31 were opined that they affect skin problems during cleaning process
- Out of 74 sweepers, Majority 55 respondents (both Strongly disagree and Disagree) are opined negatively that they are very sad to operate their family due to poor income.
- it was observed from the table no one is opined strongly agree because of the income level of the sweepers
- 27.03% of the respondents opined neutrally they neither agree or disagree the statement monthly income is sufficient for healthcare.
- Out of 74 respondents, 25 respondents are strongly disagree the monthly income is sufficient for healthcare.
- 16 respondents were neutrally accepted the above statement.
- it was interpreted from the table no one is opined strongly agree because they said that their income is very low, of these they spent Food, healthcare, travelling, etc.

SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Governments should implement and enforce comprehensive policies that ensure fair wages, job security, and access to social benefits for sweepers. This includes formalizing informal employment and providing legal protections.
- ✓ Public awareness campaigns and community engagement initiatives can help reduce stigma and promote social inclusion. Education and training programs should be made available to sanitation workers and their families to enhance their socio-economic status
- ✓ Improving access to healthcare and providing regular health check-ups for sanitation workers is essential. Employers should be mandated to provide personal protective equipment and training on occupational safety like Hand Gloves, Caps, shoes, etc.,

CONCLUSION

Sanitation workers are essential to maintaining public health but often endure poor socio-economic conditions. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving policy reforms, social inclusion programs, and improved health and safety measures. By recognizing and addressing the socioeconomic needs of sanitation workers, societies can ensure a more just and equitable environment for these indispensable workers.

The challenges faced by street cleaners in India highlight deep-rooted issues of social inequality, inadequate infrastructure, and poor labor conditions. These workers, who play an essential role in maintaining public health and hygiene, often endure unsafe working environments, low wages, and discrimination. To address these issues, it is crucial to implement systemic reforms that improve their wages, provide better protective equipment, ensure job security, and promote social recognition. Additionally, investing in modern waste management infrastructure and enhancing the social welfare system will help alleviate many of the hardships they face. By supporting street cleaners and addressing these barriers, society can create a more equitable and sustainable urban environment for all.

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