



A Study On Socio-economic Conditions Among Scavengers With Special Reference To Ganeshapuram, Thiruveareampur Block, Truchirappalli District

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT

"For in India a man is not scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth, irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not"

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

The scavenging activities are one of the common phenomena in third world countries. According to Rajnarayan et al (2008) an estimated that 1.2 million scavengers in the country are involved in the sanitation works of our surroundings. A scavenger is one who is wholly or partly engaged in the occupation of manually removing night-soil from dry latrines, or the manual handling of the dead bodies of animals and humans. And In India today, scavengers and sweepers still carry out the basic sanitary services in cities and towns. Ibbeston, (1916) have found Scavengers "Socially they are the lowest of the low, even lower perhaps than the vagrant Sansi and the gipsy Nat. according to Hindu society, scavengers are treated as untouchable, even by other untouchable castes. This discrimination also means that scavengers have extremely limited job opportunities that they live in acute poverty in segregated communities and have extremely low level of literacy and job mobility. The main objectives of this study are to find out the economic status and life style of the respondents. Descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The universe of the population was 529. Out of the 529 population the researcher selected 55 respondents through Proportionate random sampling methods was adapted in lottery method manner. Only Self-prepared questionnaire was used to measure the socio-economic condition among scavengers. Interview schedule method was used for data collection. The study reveals result that only 38.2 percentage of the respondent earn income between Rs.4500 to 6500 per month. 61.8 percentage of the respondent were not having nutritional food. (44.6%) were facing the stigma and discrimination from the society. (54.5%) feel that the society had a bad opinion about their occupation. (72.73%) were getting debt form different finance agencies.

Introduction

A significant attribute of the Indian caste system is that a scrupulous employment is connected with each caste. While higher castes benefit from wide range of choices in occupations, the polluted jobs got associated with lower castes which include sweeping streets, cleaning drains and sewers, removal of human and animal waste, leather processing, raising of pigs and the like. As most towns and villages did not have flush latrines, sweepers were manually handling human excreta and carry it on their heads. Leatherwork includes handling of dead animals and removal of their skin and hence, it is also viewed unclean. Such jobs are considered not only polluting but are also of low paid which included payment in the form of left-over from kitchen as well.

The group of scavengers is placed lowest in caste-based hierarchy. Its members are bound not only by traditional obligations and customary rules to practice this ubiquitous occupation but mythological sanctions also oblige them to carry night soil physically for disposal. Everyone borne in the sub-caste of scavengers is destined to take up this subhuman profession (Phatak, 1991). placed them at the bottom of Indian society i.e. lowest of all low castes. Despite, they are not without some social gradation: some are considered superior to others, their rank being determined by the respective origin, and the type of work they perform. The lowest place is occupied by those who manually clean latrines where scavengers come in direct contact with human excreta. The scavengers cleaning latrines are grossly underpaid, quite often abused and living a life of degradation.

Definitions of Manual Scavenging

"The manual removal of human and animal excreta using

brooms, small tin plates, and baskets carried on the head. The allocation of labour on the basis of caste is one of the fundamental tenets of the Hindu caste system. Within this system dalits have been assigned tasks and occupations which are deemed ritually polluting by other caste communities - such as sweeping, disposal of dead animals and leatherwork. By reason of their birth, dalits are considered to be "polluted", and the removal of human and animal waste by members of the "sweeper" community is allocated to them and strictly enforce"(United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 2002)

Social Status of Sanitary workers

Sanitation includes management of liquid and solid waste, personal, domestic and environmental hygiene. As human settlements grew and the cities expanded, the sanitation problem increased. In the early part of the 20th century and even today, open defecation is practiced in both rural and urban India. In urban areas open ditches, pit latrines and bucket system were used. The dehumanizing practice of removal of night soil by human hands was also prevalent. The antiquated sanitation system (bucket latrine) in India used manual scavengers drawn from the downtrodden communities to carry the buckets, which undermined their social position in society and health.

Scavengers' chronicle

Manual scavenging is the removal of excreta (night soil) manually from "dry toilets", i.e., the toilets without modern flush system. The system of building public toilets and employing people to remove excreta was introduced during British rule in India, when municipalities were constituted. That time, often containers were used in such toilets, that needed to

be emptied daily. After the invention of flush type toilets, all other types of toilets disappeared from the western world. However, this inhumane practice continues in many developing countries including India.

The socio cultural and economic realities of modern India reveal a series of paradoxes. While legally manual scavenging is banned, caste apartheid and poverty perpetuate this practice. In India, manual scavenging is a caste-based occupation carried out by dalits. The manual scavengers have different caste names in different parts of the country: Bhangis in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, Phakis in Andhra Pradesh and Sikkaliars in Tamil Nadu. These communities are invariably placed at the bottom of the caste hierarchy as well as dalit sub-caste hierarchy. Refusal to perform such manual task leads to physical abuse and a social boycott. Manual scavengers are exposed to the most virulent forms of viral and bacterial infections that affect their skin, eyes, limbs, respiratory and gastro-intestinal systems. Tuberculosis is rife in the community. A 2002 report prepared by the International Dalit Solidarity Network (including Human Rights Watch (US), Navserjan (Ahmedabad, Gujarat)) and the National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) estimates the number of dalit manual scavengers at one million³ (see the table).

Number of Persons Engaged in Manual Scavenging

S.No	Name of State/UT	No of Scavengers
1	Andhra Pradesh	30921
2	Assam	40413
3	Bihar	12226
4	Gujarat	64195
5	Haryana	36362
6	Himanchal Pradesh	4757
7	Jammu and Kashmir	4150
8	Karnataka	14555
9	Kerala	1339
10	Madhya Pradesh	80072
11	Maharashtra	64785
12	Orissa	35049
13	Punjab	531
14	Rajasthan	57736
15	Tamil Nadu	35561
16	Uttar Pradesh	149202
17	West Bengal	23852
18	Delhi	17420
19	Nagaland	1800
20	Meghalaya	607
21	Pondicherry 476	476
	Total	676009

Source: NSSO 47th Report, www.censusindia.net

Many Dalits continue to carry out occupations that are considered ritually impure, including working as manual scavengers to clean dry latrines, a practice that has been banned but remains widespread. Attempts to challenge the discrimination and restrictions they face frequently meet with violence, rape and other forms of intimidation. Many analysts interpret such violence as an attempt by upper castes to protect their established privilege, including access to cheap compliant labour from the lower castes. Despite the many legal

provisions that exist, the criminal justice system in practice often offers little protection to Dalits and may itself at times practice Untouchability (Singh and Khan 1999)

The caste hierarchy is pan-Indian, but the placement of various castes on the continuum of caste hierarchy differs from one region to another. In the plains of northwestern India, where most peasants own their land, the caste hierarchy is different from that of other regions. Here the Brahmans as usual are at the top; then come Rajputs and Baniyas on the second rung of the ladder. In the middle are placed Jats, Ahirs, Gujars, Meos and others, who, but for the Meos, are widely distributed peasant proprietors. These are the dominant landowning castes. The status of a peasant caste is determined by the ownership of land. Landowners are placed high on the hierarchy as compared to the landless. Then come the clean service castes such as Khati (carpenter), Luhar (blacksmith), Kumhar (potter), Nai (barber) and others. On the lowest rungs are placed Dhanak, (pig keeper), Julaha (weaver), Chamar (leather worker), Bhangi (scavenger) and other groups regarded as untouchables (Singh and Khan 1999).

Research Methodology Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the present study is to assess the socio-economic condition among who living scavengers at Ganeshapuram. The study objectives are to study the socio-demography profile, life style and find out economic condition status of respondent.

Research design

Descriptive research design was adopted in the present study as study describe the socio-demography profile, economic condition and life styles among scavengers who living at Ganeshapuram, Thiruveerampur block in Trichirappalli District.

Universe and sampling

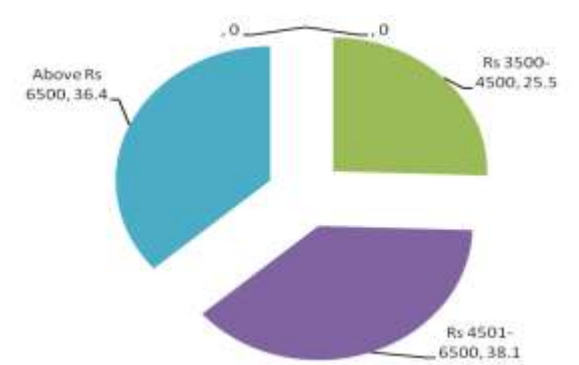
The Universe or total study population of the present study was 529. Out of 529 study population the researcher selected 55 respondents through proportionate random sampling method was adopted in lottery method manner.

Tools and Data collection

Self-prepared questionnaire was used in the present study the questionnaire was developed by the researcher to measure the socio-economic condition among scavengers. The study questionnaire dimension are namely 1) opinion about occupation 2) Health 3) social status. The researcher conducted the direct interview method to collect the data form the respondent

Results

Distribution of the respondent and their monthly income



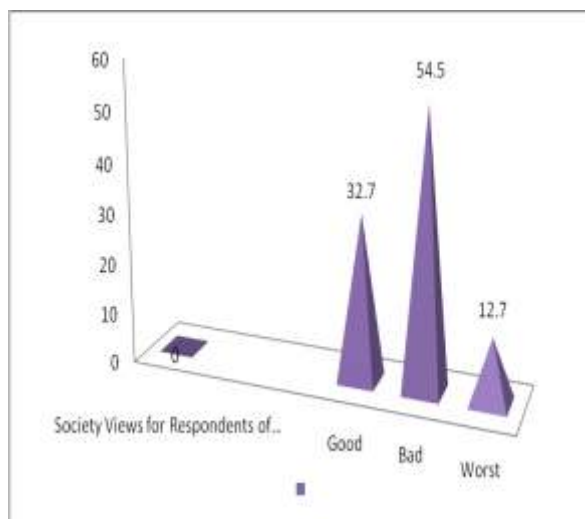
The diagram shows that very less number of the respondent getting their monthly above 6,500 rupees. Because basically scavengers have limited job and less other government job opportunity that is the reason they are getting low salary.

Distribution of the respondent and their eating nutritional food status



The diagram Shows that very minimum number of the respondent taking nutritional food in their daily meals because most of them uneducated it means they are unawareness about nutritional food and also they are earning minimum amount.

Distribution of the respondent and their society views for opinion about their occupation



The diagram shows that maximum number of the respondent said that society views their occupation bad. Because basically they are working in dirty place such as drainage, bath room, toilet, hotel leaf taking and so on. So that people saying like that their occupation bad.

More findings

- Cent (100%) percent of the respondents were Hindu religion.
- Less than half of the respondents (34.5%) belonged to scheduled caste
- More than half of the respondents (56.43%) were from nuclear family.
- More than half of the respondents (50.9%) were belonging

to a small size family.

- Majority of the respondents (74. %) were third child in their family.
- A majority of the respondents (63.6) were living in their own house.
- Less than half of the respondents (49%) were working experience is above 21 years.
- Half of the respondents family had two (50.9%) earning members in their family.
- More than half of the respondents (56.4%) were having electricity facilities.
- Half of the respondents (50.9%) houses were not having valuable goods.
- Less than half of the respondents (43.6%) houses were having television facilities.
- Majority of the respondents (74.5%) were not having domestic animals.
- Half of the respondents (50.9%) were having asserts.
- A majority of the respondents (61.8%) were having asserts like house.
- A majority of the respondents (76.4%) were houses were situated in spacious place.
- A majority of the respondents (65.5%) family had individual saving habits.
- A majority of the respondents (69.1%) were saving for their members
- Less than half of the respondents (43.6%) were saving through post office.
- Less than half of the respondents (40.8%) liked habits in beetle leaves.
- Half of the respondents (50.9%) were getting benefits from the government or NGO.
- More than half of the respondents (58.2%) were received benefits in the time of flood.
- A majority of the respondents (61.8%) were not having nutritional food.
- More than half of the respondents (52.7%) were having food in three times.
- A majority of the respondents (60%) income were adequate for their children's education.
- A less than half of the respondents (47.3%) children's future dream for government job.
- Vast majority of the respondents (87.3%) occupation affected their children's education.
- More than half of the respondents (58.2%) Were having any increments.
- More than half of the respondents (58.2%) were having job permanency
- More than half of the respondents (56.4%) were not face the stigma and discrimination from the society.
- More than half of the respondents (54.5%) feel that the society had a bad opinion about their occupation.
- More than half of the respondents (56.4%) were not join in their association.
- Vast majority of the respondents (72.73%) were having the datedness in their life.

5. SUGGESTIONS:

Recommendation to Government and Ngo

The low education among scavengers indicates that the existing facilities provided by the government for promotion of education among scavengers are not fully made use of. Concerted efforts are, therefore, needed to be made for making the community aware of the existing provisions, motivate its members to avail of these facilities and offer them special incentives. The local NGOs, educated persons from the community, and Department of Education may be involved actively in this task.

Many of the facilities and incentives made available to the wards of scavenging families are reportedly withdrawn in cases where the earning members take up non-scavenging jobs. These need to be continued to prevent reversion to traditional occupation.

Adequate technical, financial and managerial support to the liberated scavengers is to be made available as soon as their training in alternative occupation is over to avoid gap between liberation, training and rehabilitation. While doing so, due consideration may be given to the magnitude of the problem, number of dependents and their needs



Conclusion

The present study finding shown scavenger having low socio-economic status because of their job nature and their society views for occupation status also they are having very limited job and getting very low salary from their working places. Health wise scavengers are poor because their eating very limited nutritional food so the government, non-government and social worker should initiate program and services such as (i) create awareness among the scavenging communities about the programs for their benefit; (ii) give top priority to education for the children of scavengers; (iii) prepare schemes for the rehabilitation of scavengers in consultation with leaders and NGOs; (iv) develop women-specific programs, in view of the high concentration of women in this occupation; (v) improve the work conditions of scavengers by the introduction of modern technologies; and (vi) monitor the health status of scavengers, particularly women.

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