



## A Study on impact of covid19 on sanitary workers in Greater Chennai City Corporation

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### Abstract

India is home to over 5 million cleaners who clean up garbage, sewers and public toilets. Cleaners are the backbone of the waste control gadget, yet most of them work in inhumane conditions – without safety equipment and social security. From managing life-threatening tasks such as cleaning the streets, dumping garbage, and emptying septic tanks, cleaners carry out their responsibilities without adequate safety equipment, including sanitizers and masks. The lack of personal protective equipment and other safety measures at work puts sanitation workers at a high risk of infection. This paper is an attempt to study the impact of COVID-19 on sanitary workers during the pandemic period in greater Chennai city corporation.

**Key words:** COVID-19, Sanitary Workers, Health

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### Introduction

In December 2019, the Covid-19 epidemic spread in China. Since then, it has spread to more than 200 countries, affecting millions of people. Sanitation workers have long been marginalized throughout South Asia because of stigma across the nature of their paintings and discrimination based totally on caste, ethnicity and faith. The COVID-19 pandemic magnified the sizeable occupational and fitness risks they already faced, leaving many operating with confined protection and almost no formal steerage or assist. In almost all countries, health workers have been at the forefront, treating Covid-19 patients with dedication, often at personal risk. Their work has earned the respect and admiration of the people. India is home to over 5 million cleaners who clean up garbage, sewers and public toilets. Cleaners are the backbone of the waste control gadget, yet most of them work in inhumane conditions – without safety equipment and social security. Acute corona

virus disorder (COVID-19) does not show signs and symptoms of infection reduction, and cleaners and guided cleaners are at multiple risk of exposure. From managing life-threatening tasks such as cleaning the streets, dumping garbage, and emptying septic tanks, cleaners carry out their responsibilities without adequate safety equipment, including sanitizers and masks. The lack of personal protective equipment and other safety measures at work puts sanitation workers at a high risk of infection. Getting inflamed with COVID-19 can cause an added layer of stigma and discrimination that could lead to lack of livelihood and difficulties in availing proper health care offerings.

### Statement of the Problems

A fast increase in city population effects within the trouble of straining or breaking-down of sanitary centers and different infrastructure in cities and towns. Though the authorities know the fate of the sanitary



employees, it is not very severe approximately the status of the sanitary employees. For all of the manual work now machines are being used. But inside the case of sanitation work the government is yet to introduce mechanization in particular for cleansing the underground sewage. In maximum of the towns and towns the sanitary people are forced to do clean the problems within the sewage risking the lifestyles of the sanitary employees. This study aims at studying the health, safety, working condition and livelihood faced by various categories of sanitary workers in Greater Chennai City Corporation.

### **COVID-19 awareness among sanitation workers**

The study assessed the level of awareness amongst sanitation workers. The sanitation workers received a variety of information around COVID-19 from sources like employers, television, WhatsApp, Aarogya Setu app and word of mouth. More than 80% of sanitation workers interviewed were aware of at least two symptoms of COVID-19, mostly mentioning common symptoms such as cold, cough and fever. Close to 95% of sanitation workers were aware of at least one preventive measure. The most frequently mentioned preventive measures included: use of masks (69%), hand washing (56%), and physical distancing (49%). In a couple of instances, respondents also mentioned unsubstantiated measures such as drinking hot water, living in a place with high temperature, and consumption of herbal supplements. 60% of sanitation workers were aware that they should self-quarantine if they get infected.

### **Perceived health risks**

The study also attempted to gauge the level of concern amongst sanitation workers regarding the disease. Most workers interviewed were aware of the high spread of COVID-19. However, due to financial

constraints, most workers were compelled to continue work. The interviews reflected widespread concerns about falling sick, as well as the added financial stress linked to the lockdown. Many respondents also shared concerns about the risk of transmission to their family members. It is possible that these may have implications on their mental health.

### **Impact on Working Conditions**

The sudden imposition of lockdown had several direct and indirect impacts on working conditions of sanitation workers. Sanitation workers from some study locations returned to their native places, which led to availability of a smaller workforce. 23% sanitation workers had to work for longer hours than usual, ranging from additional 2-6 hours per day, due to added tasks such as disinfection. Some hospital workers were being required to work for longer shifts, even up to 30 hours. Most of these workers were not compensated for additional workload and responsibilities, including two drain cleaners who were asked to work as security guards of quarantine centers in the night shift. The shutdown of public transport services resulted in challenges in commute for 30% of sanitation workers, who were left with no choice but to either walk to their work site or use a cycle or bike. Some workers reported walking for distances as long as 32 kilometers daily. Those using private means of transport had to bear additional fuel expenses.

### **Objective**

1. To analyze the working condition by various categories of sanitary workers in the pandemic context.

### **Methodology**

The present study Covid-19 impact on Occupational Health problems if sanitary Workers in greater Chennai city corporation and Chennai district. – is a survey type and analytical research. Based on the objective have been framed and researcher confined to collect information pertaining to challenges related to health, safety, working condition



and livelihood faced by various categories of sanitary workers in the pandemic context in Chennai district. In Chennai Corporation permanent 1336 and contract 1500 are involved in crushing Sanitary workers. The tools of data collection pre-tested interview schedule were used to collect the primary data. The interview schedule consists of questions related Covid-19 impact Socio-Economic characteristics of the respondents,

working environment, by them through the Sanitary workers.

**Sources the study**

The data required for this take a look at turned into received from in addition to number primary data and secondary information. The primary data were collected directly from the 90 sanitary workers TVK Nagar Chennai Corporation and the secondary data were collected though published journal, books, newspaper, magazines.

**Analysis and Discussion**

**Table 1**  
**Suffered by Corona and Employment status of the Respondents**

Suffered by Corona	Employment Status		Total
	Permanent	Contract	
Yes	6 (6.7%)	5 (5.6%)	11 (12.2%)
No	39 (43.3%)	40 (44.4%)	79 (87.8%)
Total	45 (50.0%)	45 (50.0%)	90 (100.0%)

Source: Primary data

It is understood from table 1 that 12.2 percent of the respondents are suffered by corona. Likewise, 87.8 percent of the respondents are not suffered by corona. With regard to the permanent workers, majority of 6.7 percent of the respondents are suffered by corona. Likewise, 43.3 percent of the respondents are not suffered by corona. In the case of contract workers, majority of 5.6 percent of the respondents are suffered by corona. Likewise, 44.4 percent of the respondents are not suffered by corona. The table clearly shows that out of the sample population, most of the respondents for not suffered by corona as the highest score is 87.8 percent.

**Table 2**  
**Work at the times of pandemic and Employment status of the Respondents**

Work at the times of pandemic	Employment Status		Total
	Permanent	Contract	
Yes	41 (45.5%)	36 (40.0%)	77 (85.6%)
No	4 (4.4%)	9 (10.0%)	13 (14.4%)
Total	45 (50.0%)	45 (50.0%)	90 (100.0%)

Source: Primary data

It is understood from table 2 that 85.6 percent of the respondents are work at the time of pandemic. Likewise, 14.4 percent of the respondents are not work at the time of pandemic. With regard to the permanent workers, majority of 45.5 percent of the respondents are work at the time



of pandemic. Likewise, 4.4 percent of the respondents are not work at the time of pandemic. In the case of contract workers, majority of 40.0 percent of the respondents are work at the time of pandemic. Likewise, 10.0 percent of the respondents are not work at the time of pandemic. The table clearly shows that out of the sample population, most of the respondents for work at the time of pandemic as the highest score is 85.6 percent.

**Table 3**

**Faced any difficulties during the pandemic time work and Employment status of the Respondents**

Faced any difficulties during the pandemic time work	Employment Status		Total
	Permanent	Contract	
Transport	18 (20.0%)	21 (23.3%)	39 (43.3%)
Food	16 (17.8%)	13 (14.4%)	29 (32.2%)
Wok Pressure	8 (8.9%)	7 (7.8%)	15 (16.7%)
Health Issue	3 (3.3%)	4 (4.4%)	7 (7.8%)
Total	45 (50.0%)	45 (50.0%)	90 (100.0%)

Source: Primary data

It is understood from table 3 that 43.3 percent of the respondents are Transport problems during the pandemic time work. Likewise, 32.2 percent of the respondents are food problems during the pandemic time work. 16.7 percent of the respondents are work pressure problems during the pandemic time work. Further 7.8 percent of the respondents are health issue problems during the pandemic time work. With regard to the permanent workers, majority of 20.0 percent of the respondents are Transport problems during the pandemic time work. Likewise, 17.8 percent of the respondents are food problems during the pandemic time work. 8.9 percent of the respondents are work pressure problems during the pandemic time work. Further 3.3 percent of the respondents are health issue problems during the pandemic time work. With regard to the contract workers, majority of 23.3 percent of the respondents are Transport problems during the pandemic time work. Likewise, 14.4 percent of the respondents are food problems during the pandemic time work. 7.8 percent of the respondents are work pressure problems during the pandemic time work. Further 4.4 percent of the respondents are health issue problems during the pandemic time work. The table clearly shows that out of the sample population, most of the respondents for transport problems during the pandemic time work as the highest score is 43.3 percent.

**Table 4**

**Handle the type of work among covid-19 period and Employment status of the Respondents**

Handle the type of work among covid-19 period	Employment Status		Total
	Permanent	Contract	
Sweeper	6 (6.7%)	0	6 (6.7%)
Sewage cleaning	28 (31.1%)	39 (43.3%)	67 (74.4%)
Sewage cleaning and vehicle driver	11 (12.2%)	6 (6.7%)	17 (18.9%)



Total	45	(50.0%)	45	(50.0%)	90 (100.0%)
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Source: Primary data

It is understood from table 4 that 6.7 percent of the respondents are doing Sweeper work among covid-19 period. Likewise, 74.4 percent of the respondents are doing sewage cleaning work among covid-19 period. 18.9 percent of the respondents are doing sewage cleaning and vehicle driver work among covid-19 period. With regard to the permanent workers, majority of 31.1 percent of the respondents are doing Sewage cleaning work among covid-19 period. Likewise, 12.2 percent of the respondents are doing Sewage cleaning and vehicle driver work among covid-19 period. 6.7 percent of the respondents are doing Sweeper work among covid-19 period. With regard to the contract workers, majority of 43.3 percent of the respondents are doing Sewage cleaning work among covid-19 period. Likewise, 6.7 percent of the respondents are doing Sewage cleaning and vehicle driver work among covid-19 period. The table clearly shows that out of the sample population, most of the respondents for doing Sewage cleaning work among covid-19 period as the highest score is 74.4 percent.

**Table 5**  
**Extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period and Employment status of the Respondents**

Extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period	Employment Status		Total
	Permanent	Contract	
Yes	5 (5.6%)	8 (8.9%)	13 (14.4%)
No	40 (44.4%)	37 (41.1%)	77 (85.6%)
Total	45 (50.0%)	45 (50.0%)	90 (100.0%)

Source: Primary data

It is understood from table 5 that 14.4 percent of the respondents are extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period. Likewise, 85.6 percent of the respondents are not extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period. With regard to the permanent workers, majority of 44.4 percent of the respondents are not extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period. Likewise, 5.6 percent of the respondents are extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period. With regard to the contract workers, majority of 41.1 percent of the respondents are not extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period. Likewise, 8.9 percent of the respondents are extra income provided by the

government in the pandemic period. The table clearly shows that out of the sample population, most of the respondents for not extra income provided by the government in the pandemic period as the highest score is 85.6 percent.

**Summary**

1. from the above analysis, the researcher found that the majority of the workers didnt affect by the virus even they worked in the pandemic.
2. There was a highest number of sanitary workers were worked during the pandemic. From my observation, not only the permanent workers also the corporation recruited large number of contract workers during the pandemic.



3. At the time of pandemic transportation was restricted. But considering the sanitary workers, they were suffered to travel to reach their working site. There was no additional transportation facilities for them.

4. During the pandemic, sewage cleaning was the major work. According to the primary data most workers engaged in sewage cleaning.

5. Sanitary workers who did their job with high risk. Even though they didn't get any additional income to meet their expense.

### conclusions

It is clear that, during the pandemic period sanitary workers were the most affected people. The workers who served the society during the pandemic situation without any hesitation. One of major observation is that sanitary workers do not receive training or specialized protection against the virus. Sanitary Workers do not have adequate safety equipment to properly protect themselves. Most workers were without the necessary equipment, uniforms, emergency equipment and health insurance before the outbreak began.

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