



A Study on Occupational Health Hazards Faced by Women Street Sweepers of Vadodara City. A Study on Occupational Health Hazards Among Female Street Sweepers of Ward Number 4, 5, 6 of Vadodara Municipal Corporation.

Mr. Parth Pratik Gandhi¹, Dr. Christina Parmar²

¹Master of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India. Email ID: gandhiparth194@gmail.com

²Faculty of Social Work, Parul Institute of Social Work, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India Email ID: christina.parmar81018@paruluniversity.ac.in

ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the occupational health hazards encountered by female street sweepers working within Ward Number 4, 5, and 6 of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation. Street sweeping is an essential but physically demanding occupation, often associated with numerous occupational health risks, particularly for women who may face unique challenges and vulnerabilities in the workplace. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, this study aims to identify and assess the prevalent occupational health hazards experienced by female street sweepers in Vadodara City.

The research employs surveys, interviews, and direct observations to gather comprehensive data on the nature and extent of occupational health hazards faced by women in this occupation. It explores various dimensions of occupational hazards, including physical, ergonomic, chemical, biological, and psychosocial factors, and examines how these hazards impact the health, safety, and well-being of female street sweepers. Additionally, the study investigates the prevalence of work-related injuries, illnesses, and musculoskeletal disorders among women in this profession.

Furthermore, the research delves into the socio-economic and cultural determinants that shape the occupational health and safety experiences of female street sweepers, considering factors such as working conditions, access to protective equipment, training opportunities, and social support systems. By elucidating the specific challenges faced by women in this occupation, the study aims to inform policy and intervention strategies aimed at improving occupational health and safety outcomes for female street sweepers in Vadodara City.

The findings of this study contribute to a better understanding of the occupational health risks faced by women engaged in street sweeping activities and provide valuable insights for municipal authorities, public health professionals, and advocacy groups to develop targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting a safer and healthier work environment for female street sweepers. Ultimately, the research underscores the importance of addressing gender-specific occupational health concerns to ensure equitable and sustainable employment opportunities for women in urban sanitation sectors.

Keywords: Occupational Health Hazards, Female, Street Sweepers

Introduction:

In urban settings worldwide, street sweeping serves as a crucial aspect of municipal sanitation, ensuring clean and hygienic public spaces. However, the individuals tasked with this essential job, particularly female street sweepers, often face a myriad of occupational health hazards inherent to their work environment. This study focuses on examining the occupational health risks encountered by women engaged in street sweeping activities within Ward Number 4, 5, and 6 of the Vadodara Municipal Corporation in Vadodara City.

The occupation of street sweeping is physically demanding and involves prolonged exposure to various environmental and occupational hazards. While the importance of ensuring the health and safety of workers in such occupations is widely acknowledged, there exists a paucity of research specifically addressing the occupational health concerns of female street sweepers, particularly in the context of Vadodara City.

This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the occupational health hazards faced by female street sweepers in Vadodara City, focusing on the specific wards mentioned. By examining the nature and extent of these hazards, as well as their implications for the health and well-being of female workers, the study aims to shed light on an often-overlooked aspect of urban sanitation labor.

Understanding the occupational health risks faced by female street sweepers is of paramount importance for several reasons. Firstly, it is essential to protect the health and safety of these workers, who play a vital role in maintaining the cleanliness and sanitation of urban environments. Secondly, addressing the occupational health concerns of female street sweepers is crucial from a gender equity perspective, as women may face unique challenges and vulnerabilities in the workplace that require targeted interventions.

Moreover, by identifying and addressing occupational health hazards among female street sweepers, municipalities like Vadodara City can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their sanitation initiatives, ensuring a safer and healthier working environment for all workers involved.

In light of these considerations, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the occupational health risks faced by female street sweepers in Vadodara City, with the ultimate goal of informing policy and intervention strategies aimed at promoting the health, safety, and well-being of these essential workers.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Sanitation workers face several health and safety risks, financial challenges and stigma due to the nature of their work. Sanitation work is a profession which involves the making of a clean and healthy surroundings. However there are a lot of issues and difficulties faced by these workers.

Due to heavy work load the worker's often go through lot of physical health problems. Street sweepers are exposed to back pain when they engage in repetitive movements like bending, sweeping and picking dirt. In developing countries, street cleaners seem to be still heavily exposed to dust and, in most cases, no suitable protective measures are available. Especially in industrialized countries there exist a number of standards and recommendations for waste workers that aim to reduce their occupational health impacts.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Assessment of physical and psychological wellbeing of workers in unorganized sector(2016) The workers working in the chikankari, brick kilns, ornamental, sanitary and construction sectors, were highly exposed to the risks related to physical health, like moderate and mild pain at the shoulder, lower back, neck, joint pain, headache etc.

Challenges in municipal solid waste management case of waste collection and transportation in ahmedabad (2020) Management of Municipal Solid Waste in Cities is one of the most pressing issues of the day.

Socio_Economic Conditions of Sweepers in Maharashtra_A sociological study of sweepers in selected Urban_Rural Areas (2008) After analyzing the data collected from a sample of 395 men and women safari kamgars' the study formulated some conclusions.

Occupational Health Safety and Livelihood Implications of Leather Industries in Tamil Nadu(2022) The study also discovered that in tanneries across Vellore, poor leadership and management practises on occupational health and safety have a negative impact on workers' health and safety.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the profile of the female street sweepers.
2. To study the physical health problems faced by women street sweepers.
3. To study the socio-economic condition of female street sweepers.
4. To know their awareness about the benefits.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is descriptive in nature as it aims at studying problems in depth. As the study aimed at understanding what are the health issues faced by female street sweepers in ward 4,5 and 6 of Vadodara district along with understanding their socio-economic conditions and their awareness for the health benefits they get. So, the researcher took descriptive research study.

UNIVERSE

The universe comprises of all the female sweepers of Ward 4, 5 and 6 of Vadodara Municipal Corporation .As there are zones in wards the study was carried out in zones. The study included females who were 25 and above 41 in the ward 4, 5 and 6.

SAMPLE

The number of sample consists of the female sweepers in ward 4, 5 and 6 of Vadodara Municipal Corporation. The sample confined of 89 females in which 57 females were above 41, 26 were between 36 to 40, 5 between 31 to 35 and 3 were in between 25 to 30.This females were all permanent workers.

TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher took the Interview Schedule as a tool for data collection. An interview schedule is a plan for the interviewer that contains a set of questions with already researched answers to interview a candidate. It works as a guideline for an interviewer. This research included a questionnaire which comprised of questions relating to the health problems they face, their socio-economic conditions, waste they majorly deal with and their awareness. The questions were asked by the interviewer which were planned and structured according to the study. All the questions were close ended questions as per the requirement for the study. The study included 32 questions related to the health problems, their awareness and various health benefits they get.

FINDINGS:

1. The study found that there were a lot of females who faced problem due to the work which was due to the inhalation of the dust and fume.
2. The study shows that the majorities of the females was of age 41 and above and among them 91.01% were married. This shows that the women are independent but were somewhere dependent on their spouse.
3. The awareness of the worker based on the study shows that they are aware of the different kinds of waste which includes liquid waste, solid waste, organic waste, and different kind of hazardous wastes.
4. According to the study, 68.05% females weren't aware of the health benefits that they get and 83.14% females were aware of the official working hours that are 8 hours per day. This suggests that they are working without having basic ground knowledge but are aware of few things which are in line with them.
5. 85% of female sweepers say that they get safety equipments for the work like gloves and masks. This shows that they are getting proper protective measures from the government which ensures their safety.

CONCLUSION:

Sanitation plays a critical role in maintaining public health in any society. In India, sanitation is a complex issue in view of the prevailing caste system, unchecked urbanization, and the new economic policy of the 1990s that led to privatization and liberalization.

Sanitary workers in India are referred to as 'Safai Karmacharis'. The majority of the Safai Karmacharis belong to 'untouchable' castes. They clear tonnes of garbage every day, unclog the blocked man holes, empty the excreta from septic tanks, which is a vital task in maintaining public health, but their socio-economic conditions are pathetic. They work in the most inhuman and hazardous conditions. They are not paid well and are not paid regularly. They do not even have basic civic amenities like drinking water and toilets. They collect garbage and handle excreta with their bare hands, without any safety equipment, enduring serious health hazards, causing life expectancy to fall drastically. Basic human dignity is wilfully denied to them. They are doing essential work, despite which they have been stigmatised, humiliated and forced to live like aliens in the societies they serve.

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