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1. Context

- The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Rules, 2013, mandates, 'Regular medical check-up of sewage workers which shall include the examination of respiratory organs, skin injuries, and other occupational diseases and injuries for their treatment to ensure that sewage workers afflicted with such diseases or injuries do not enter sewers for cleaning.'

- The reality is that health check-ups are not regularly conducted for sanitation workers. There is also very little awareness among this high-risk group about the need to access timely and preventive healthcare considering the occupational hazards they face.
- As the nature of their work often exposes sanitation workers to various occupational and environmental hazards which leads to either diseases, disorders or accidents.



2. Gaps Identified

- Sanitation workers attached with bigger urban local bodies receive sporadic healthcare.
- No access to healthcare for sanitation workers from smaller ULBs, informal sanitation workers and desludging operators.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Periodic health camps for sanitation workers and their family members in Town Panchayats
- Free medication, referral and counselling services



- Co-ordination with the hospital for conducting camps
- Arranging venue and logistics, refreshment for the medical team.
- Mobilisation of sanitation workers for the camp.

8. Effort Towards Institutionalisation

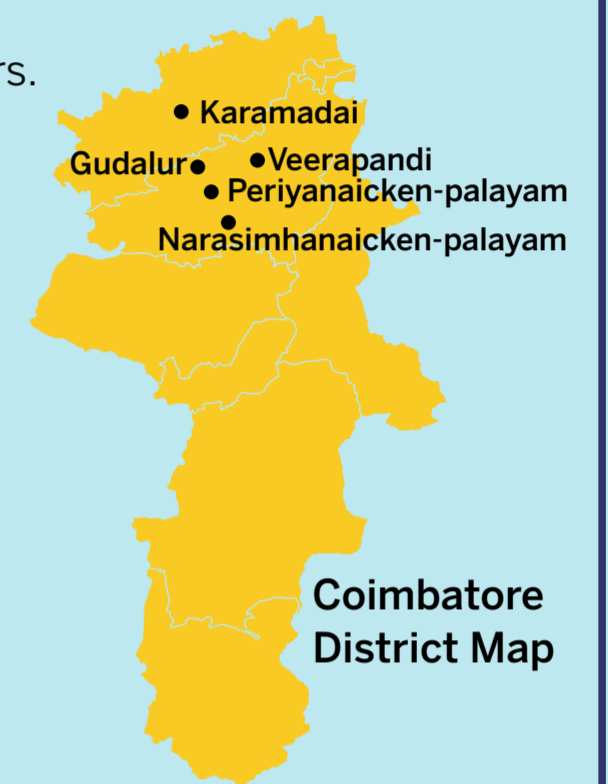
- Five clustering ULBs and a private hospital are in the process of signing a MoU to conduct periodic health camps for the sanitation workforce.



- Linking sanitation workers with Govt. health insurance schemes in progress.

3. Action Plan: To introduce Health Camps as Incremental Measure

- The main objective of the health camps is to bring affordable healthcare and health education to the sanitation workers and desludging operators.
- As a preventive measure, regular health camps in partnership with the town panchayats and two private hospitals were organised for all the sanitation workers and their family members from five clustering urban local bodies from Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu.

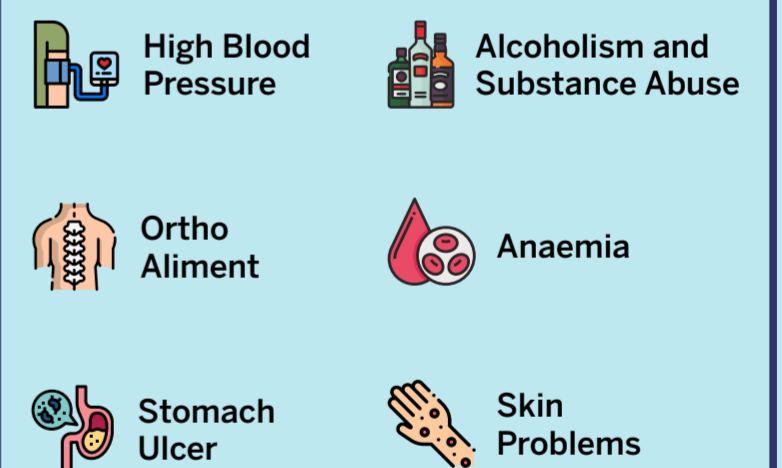


5. Intervention

- A Private hospital was roped in to facilitate health camps since Govt. hospital could not render continuous support.
- Initially these Health camps rendered services such as general screening, diagnostics, counselling and free medicines. Later knowing the need of sanitation worker and their health conditions, it was extended to subsidised referral services (30% of the treatment charges was contributed by the hospital) and specialised doctors were brought in for master check-ups (which included ENT, gynaecology, Skin, ortho and physiotherapy).
- 11 health camps have been organised so far and more than 800 sanitation workers and their family members have been benefitted.

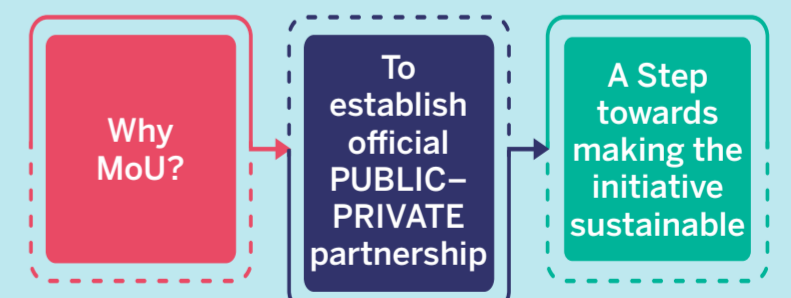
6. Findings

The observations at the health camps identified the following health issues that were predominant among sanitation workers



7. Way Forward

- The outcomes of these health camps underline the need for a standardised healthcare system for the sanitation workforce.
- Drawing on the results of these health camps, it has been proposed to institutionalise the health camps by facilitating Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the five town panchayats – Periyanaicken-palayam, Narasimhanaicken-palayam, Gudalur, Veerapandi and Karamadai – and private hospitals.



9. Outcomes

Sanitation Workers

- Free, regular and affordable and preventive health service.
- Regular health monitoring and evaluation.
- Improved health seeking behaviour.

Private Hospital

- First-of-a-kind PPP model for providing health services to sanitation workers.
- Recognition.
- Increased client base.
- Media coverage as a goodwill.
- Research on occupational health hazards

Town Panchayats

- Provide regular health services and help monitor worker's health periodically.
- Model to other town panchayats.
- Potential for statewide scaling up.