

OVERVIEW

SANITATION WORKERS : INSIGHTS INTO THEIR LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS



FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH SANITATION WORKERS

Objectives

- Understand the various categories of sanitation workers based on employment and type of work carried out
- Outreach of current government schemes
- Challenges faced by workers
- Explore a set of options to improve health and safety, social security and living conditions

18 FGDs were conducted

10 with occupational groups

08 with families of sanitation workers.

KEY FINDINGS



Different roles

Nearly 3200 workers perform different roles eg.

- o Toilet cleaners
- o Sewer maintenance workers
- o Solid waste handling workers
- o Rag pickers
- o De-sludging workers



Different contractual arrangements range from government paid employee to government contracts, to daily wage labourers

• Significant differences between permanent workers in comparison with contract workers in their salaries, benefits, tenure, and job security.

• Permanent workers also received benefits such as provident fund, insurance, and pension plans apart from salary.

• Contract workers are employed through contractors for corporation and railways. Paid salary on a monthly basis based on daily rates with a certain fraction of amount deducted for insurance and provident fund.



Occupational health and safety issues

• Skin infections, asthma, eye irritation, and tuberculosis often affect sanitation workers.

• While workers are aware of safety gears, they prefer not to use due to lack of comfort.

• Many a times, tools provided are inadequate for handling waste.



Social security

• Most sanitation workers were not aware of Government welfare schemes.

• While permanent workers are able to obtain loans, contract workers do not have access to credit due to ineligibility in meeting requisite criteria and resort to taking loans at high rates from money lenders.



Working conditions and social status

• Schemes such as SBM while improving the sanitation situation have not resulted in workers gaining respect. Children of sanitation workers oppose the discriminatory treatment meted out to their parents at work. The increased focus on sanitation has not improved their social status.

• Children and youth in the community lack guidance and support for education and career opportunities.

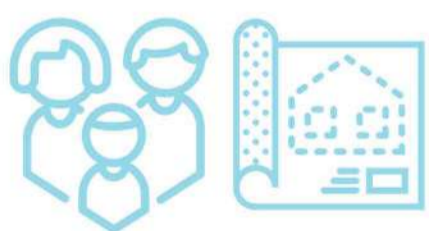


Way forward

• Working with ULBs/Government to regularise health camps for all types of sanitation workers. These could be co-funded by private sector or carried out under National Urban Health Mission.

• Arrange health insurance for sanitation workers under schemes such as PM-JAY.

• Arrange scholarships for children of sanitary workers.



SOCIAL MAPPING EXERCISE

CONDUCTED FOR 23 SANITATION WORKER SETTLEMENTS

A TYPICAL MAP DEPICTS SANITATION WORKERS RESIDENCES BY TYPE, SANITATION FACILITIES, OPEN DEFECATION SPOTS, PUBLIC AND INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE.



- LEGEND**
- ★ Govt. Workers (25)
 - ▲ Contract Workers (26)
 - Private Workers (3)
 - 🚽 Household Toilets (26)
 - 🚪 Railway Compound
 - 🚻 Open Toilet
 - 📏 UFD Point
 - 🚽 Open Defecation
 - 🚰 Old Railway Pump House
 - 🏠 Railway Quarters
 - 🚽 Old Railway Toilet
 - 🎡 Playground
 - 🏪 Temple