

# Perception And Problem Faced By Scavengers In Coimbatore City

Ms.Sriharini K<sup>1</sup>, Dr. M. K. Palanichamy<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dept of COMMERCE

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept of COMMERCE

<sup>1,2</sup> Sri Krishna Adithya College Of Arts And Science, Coimbatore- 641010

**Abstract-** This study investigates the perceptions and challenges encountered by scavengers in Coimbatore City, shedding light on their socio-economic status and the environmental impact of their work. Through a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, the research explores the perceptions of scavengers regarding their occupation, societal attitudes towards them, and their living conditions. Additionally, it delves into the various problems they confront daily, such as health hazards, social stigma, and economic instability. The findings reveal a complex interplay of factors contributing to the marginalization of scavengers, highlighting the need for comprehensive policy interventions to address their plight. By understanding the perceptions and challenges faced by scavengers, this study aims to inform policymakers and stakeholders in Coimbatore City to implement sustainable solutions that enhance the well-being and dignity of scavenger communities.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Scavenger workers, including street sweepers, janitors, and custodians, are the unsung heroes of modern society, ensuring the cleanliness and functionality of urban and natural environments. From bustling city streets to remote wilderness areas, these individuals tirelessly remove debris, waste, and unwanted materials, contributing to safety, sanitation, and aesthetic appeal. Despite their crucial role, scavenger workers often face challenges such as exposure to hazardous materials, physically demanding tasks, and low wages. Additionally, in natural ecosystems, scavengers play a vital role in recycling nutrients and maintaining environmental balance, yet they are frequently misunderstood and persecuted. Recognizing the importance of scavengers and addressing their challenges is essential for fostering coexistence and ensuring the well-being of both human communities and the natural world.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Scavengers face significant health risks, including exposure to human waste and hazardous substances, leading to diseases like cholera, typhoid, and respiratory infections. They

also endure social discrimination. Moreover, they are prone to skin and blood infections, respiratory issues, and skeletal disorders due to their work. The study focuses on understanding these challenges faced by scavengers, highlighting the urgent need for intervention and support to safeguard their health and well-being.

## OBJECTIVES:

- To study socio economic scavenger
- To investigate the perception of scavenger towards their work
- To identify the problem faced in their work
- To offer suitable suggestion and recommendation.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

- Scavenger hunts can be adapted to various settings and objectives, involving finding objects, taking photos, gathering information, or solving puzzles.
- They can be done in-person or digitally, and can be themed around holidays, movies, or historical events.
- Scavenger hunts can be educational, teaching concepts or skills, or recreational, providing entertainment and fostering teamwork.

## II. RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a systematic approach or framework used by researchers to conduct their investigations, gather data, analyse findings and conclusions. Methodology is a way to systematically solve a research problem. It explains the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher to solve a research problem.

## SAMPLING METHOD:

Random sampling method was used for selecting the respondents.

## AREA OF THE STUDY

The area of the study is about Coimbatore City.

#### **SAMPLE SIZE:**

The sample size taken for the present study is 105 respondents.

#### **METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

**Sources of data:** Primary data

#### **PRIMARY DATA**

The present study is based on primary data. It is collected through questionnaire.

#### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:**

- Limited resources or time constraints may hinder the completion of tasks.
- The sample size is small for the accurate study of the scavengers.
- Availability of time and cost aspects are the factors that are considered as the limitation for the study.

### **III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

(MOHD WAZID KHAN, 2022)

Manual scavenging is a degrading occupation that no one should endure, involving carrying human waste and filth, perpetuating caste-based discrimination. The government must urgently abolish this practice and provide support for those involved, ensuring their rights and dignity as citizens of the largest democracy. It's imperative to stand united in eradicating this stain on our nation's conscience and assisting those affected in accessing their rightful privilege.

(FILIPPUS NAMBULI, 2021)

The study titled "Waste Scavenging in Namibia" investigates waste pickers' demographics, socioeconomic impacts, and motivations. Findings show poverty (71.1%) and unemployment (64.4%) as primary drivers. Waste scavenging significantly contributes to livelihoods (93.3%) through material sales, primarily metals (80%). Despite being overlooked, scavenging plays a vital role in waste management and waste pickers' well-being in Keetmanshoop. (GEORGE, 2020)

The study reveals that the majority of manual scavengers are male, primarily engaged in this work to support their families. Male workers outnumber females in manual

scavenging roles. Additionally, most manual scavengers identify with Hinduism and Tamil origin. Marriage often imposes significant financial responsibilities, compelling many married manual scavengers to continue this work. Furthermore, a large portion of manual scavengers belongs to scheduled castes, with diversity observed within this community.

### **IV. FINDINGS**

- Majority 40.9% of the respondents are from the age of 40 – 55 years
- Majority 73.3% of the respondents are female.
- Majority 82.8% of the respondents were married.
- Majority 40.9% of the respondents salary are 15k – 20k
- Majority 30.4% of the respondents have 10 – 15 years of experience
- Majority 85.7% of the respondents has work days in Monday – Sunday.
- Majority 75.2% of the respondents have received special payments.
- Majority 50.4% of the respondents received 1000 – 2000 in special payments.
- Majority 40% of the respondents faced difficulties in summer season.
- Majority 40.9% of the respondents have chosen economic necessity has the reason for engaging in scavenging activities.
- Majority 23.8% of the respondents are neither disadvantaged nor advantaged in their socio economic.
- Majority 50.4% of the respondents have chosen respected and valued for perceive the societal view of scavenging.
- Majority 50.4% of the respondents accept their work.
- Majority 35.2% of the respondents faced lack and legal recognition and rights challenges while scavenging.
- Majority 88.5% of the respondents have not received benefits from government.
- Majority 50.4% of the respondents choose access to healthcare and satisfaction facilities to improve working conditions.

### **V. SUGGESTIONS**

Create alternative livelihood opportunities for scavengers who wish to transition out of scavenging. This could involve providing access to microfinance, skills training, and support for small businesses

Ensure access to healthcare services and social support for scavengers and their families. This includes

regular health check-ups, vaccinations, and access to affordable healthcare facilities.

Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote respect for the dignity of scavengers. This can help change societal perceptions and reduce discrimination against scavenging communities.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The challenges faced by scavengers are complex and deeply rooted in socio-economic, environmental, and cultural factors. Despite their critical role in waste management, scavengers endure stigma, exploitation, and unsafe working conditions. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including policy reform, community empowerment, and infrastructure development. By formalizing scavenging, providing education and healthcare, and promoting waste segregation, we can enhance their livelihoods and waste management practices. Collaboration between government, NGOs, businesses, and communities is essential. It's crucial to recognize the dignity of scavengers, challenge societal perceptions, and strive for a more equitable future. Together, we can support scavengers and create sustainable environments where they are valued and respected.

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