

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FEMALE SANITARY LABOURERS IN COLOMBO DISTRICT, SRI LANKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO PRIVATE SECTOR CLEANING SERVICES

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Sanitary labourers can be identified as one of the marginal communities in Sri Lanka. State and private organizations outsource their sanitary and cleaning services. Hence these services are provided by private service providers as well. Sanitary labourers employed under them are with minimum wages, facilities, and labour rights. The main objective of this study is to identify the socio-economic status of female sanitary labourers employed by private sanitary service providers in Colombo district. A sample of 31 female sanitary labourers was selected by random sampling method who works under 4 different service providers. Pretested questionnaires were used for data collection and data analysis was done using Microsoft Excel 2010. The age of sample range 32 – 72 yrs. 8(26%) below 50 yrs. 23(74%) above 50 yrs. 10(32%) above 60 and 1(3%) above 70 yrs. Service experience range 1 – 23 years: Mean 6.4, Median 4, Mode 4 yrs. 27(87%) attended school and range grade 2 – 10. 4(13%) did not. 8(30%) bellow grade 5 and 19(70%) grade 6 – 10. 18(58%) married, 7(22%) widows, 3(10%) unmarried, or separated. 7(39%) husbands are employed. 11(61%) husbands unemployed: 4(37%) elderly and unable to work, 2(18%) staying at home due to lack of proper job, or disabled, 1(9%) suffering from chronic illnesses, or drug addicted, or lazy or idle persons. 28 respondents have children: Mean, Median, and Mode equal to 3. 19 have married children: Mean 3, Median 2, and Mode 1. 14 have unmarried children: Mean 2, Median 2, and Mode 3. However, 7 have both married and unmarried children. Average income is SLR 18,000.00. Dependents status: 7(22%) respondent, husband, and unmarried children, 6(20%) respondent and husband, or respondent and married children, 4(13%) respondent only, 3(10%) respondent and unmarried children, 2(6%) respondent, husband, unmarried children, and parent, 1(3%) respondent, husband, married and unmarried children, or respondent, husband, and married children, or respondent, parent, and siblings. 28(90%) of respondents' neighbours know respondents' occupation and 3(10%) hide it. 28(90%) are involved in this job because there are no adequate qualifications for any other job. 3(10%) bankrupt persons, 1(3%) for additional income or as an easy way of income. Perception about life: 4(13%) very happy, 8(26%) happy, 8(26%) patient, 9(29%) sad, and 2(6%) very sad. The findings of the study show that the largest set of female sanitary labourers are over 50 years old, married, husbands unemployed, earn for them - their husbands and unmarried children, and lead a sad life.

Keywords: Colombo, Labourer, Marginal communities, Sanitary services