



## **Socio-Economic and Occupational Conditions of the Scavenging Community: A Quantitative Analysis**

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### **Abstract:**

*This study examines the socio economic and occupational conditions of the scavenging community in Tiruchirappalli, Tamilnadu, based on a sample of 50 respondents. Educational background, household circumstances, income, work experiences, health, and access to safety and rehabilitation measures are the main areas of attention for the researcher. The results underscore the difficulties encountered by this group, such as low levels of education, restricted availability of protective equipment, hazards related to occupational health, and insufficient rehabilitation facilities.*

**Keywords:** *Socio-Economic, Occupational, Health.*

### **Introduction:**

In Indian culture, a large number of workers from lower socioeconomic strata are compelled to perform manual scavenging in order to make ends meet on meagre pay. Although this practice has long been widespread in our country, the Supreme Court has ruled time and again that it must stop because it harms the health of those who participate and frequently leads to the deaths of many people. According to a recent court judgement, individuals are still dying, and we believe that the time has come to issue directives. “manual scavenger” is clear as: “A person engaged or employed, at the beginning of this Act or at any time thereafter, by an individual, a local authority, an agency, or a contractor, to manually clean, carry, dispose of, or otherwise handle in any manner human excreta in an unsanitary latrine or in an open drain or pit into which the human excreta from the unsanitary latrines is disposed of, or on a railway track, or in any other areas or locations that the federal government or a state government may designate prior to the excreta completely breaking down in a form that may be specified, and the term “manual scavenging” will be interpreted appropriately. The caste system has been functioning in India since ancient times. Some individuals experience prejudice because of it, and often, they were the ones that carried out the manual scavenging tasks. They belong to the downtrodden class and are often quite poor. They cannot acquire formal education because they do not have sufficient access to even the most basic essentials, and the same is true for their children.

They endure social, economic, and political persecution in addition to working in incredibly unfavourable conditions that seriously harm their health. They are known by several different names throughout the

country, such as arunthathiyar in Tamilnadu, phakis in Andhra Pradesh, and bhangis in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.

### **Social Eminence of Sanitary workers**

Personal, household, and environmental hygiene, as healthy as the handling of liquid and solid waste, are all included in sanitation. The issue of cleanliness worsened as cities and human settlements proliferated. In both rural and urban areas of India, open defecation has been a common practice since the early 1900s. Pit latrines, bucket systems, and open ditches were utilised in urban areas. Additionally common was the cruel custom of using human hands to remove night soil. The usage of manual scavengers from the poorer groups to carry the buckets in India's outdate sanitation system (bucket latrine) damaged their health and social standing.

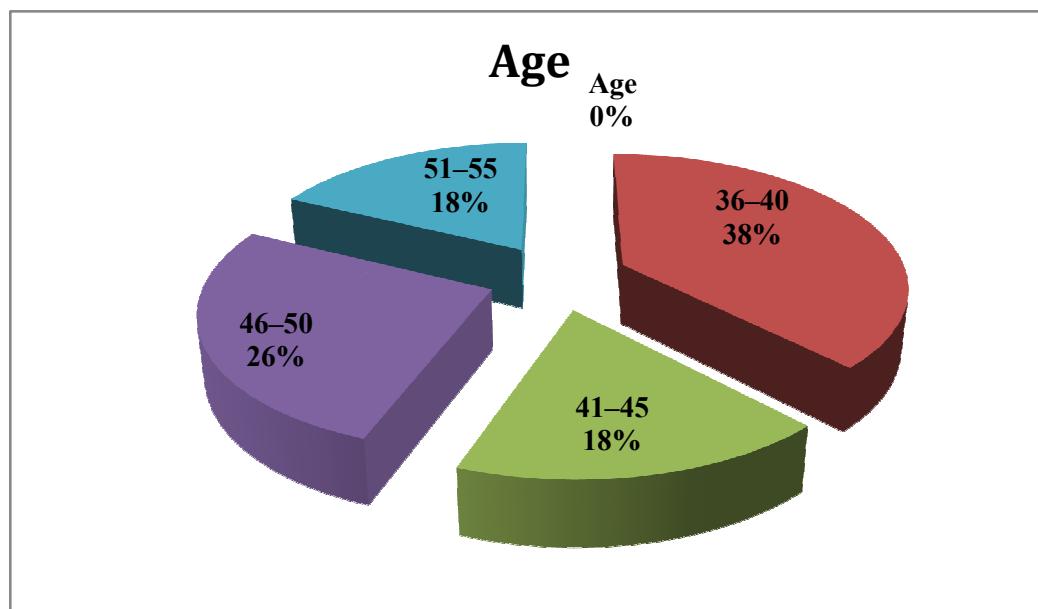
### **Aim and Objectives**

The study is to assess the Socioeconomic and Occupational Conditions of the Scavenging Community. The study objectives are to study the socio demography profile, life style and health condition of respondent.

### **Research Methodology**

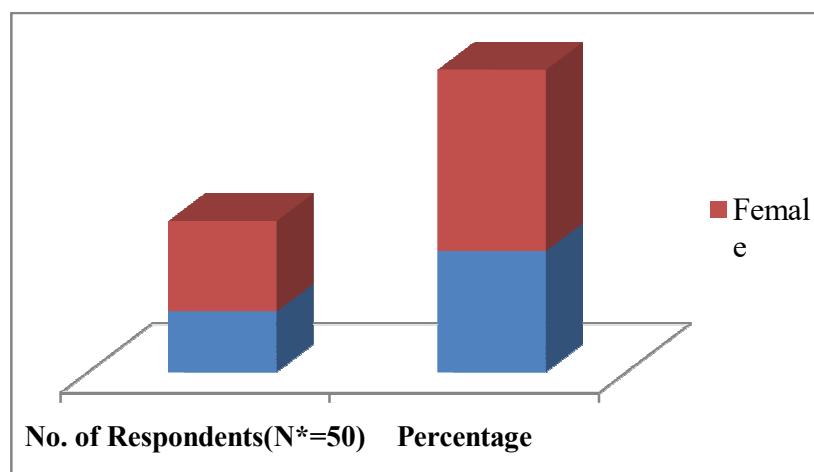
The current study was conducted based on the primary data collected through field survey with the well-structured interview schedule and purposive sampling. This research is a developer work in the Tiruchirappalli district of Tamilnadu, the research used an descriptive research design. The researcher selected 50 respondents of the study.

**Table-1**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Age**



The table indicates that more than one third 17 (34.0%) of the respondents belong to the age group of 36–40 years. Nearly one fourth 12 (24.0%) of the respondents are in the age group of 46–50 years. An equal proportion 8 (16.0%) each fall in the age groups of 41–45 years and 51–55 years. Only a small proportion 5 (10.0%) of the respondents are in the age group of 26–30 years.

**Table - 2**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Sex**



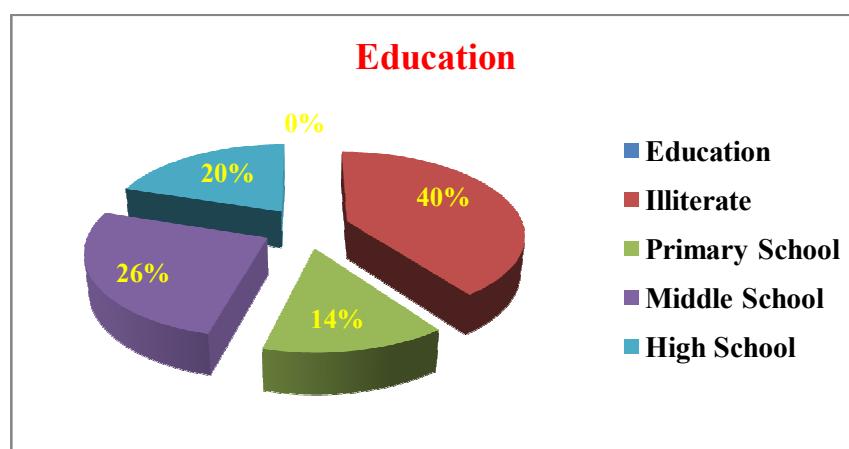
The table reveals that the majority 30 (60.0%) of the respondents are female, while the remaining 20 (40.0%) are male. This shows that female participation in scavenging work is relatively higher.

**Table-3**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Religion**

Sl. No.	Religion	No. of Respondents(N*=50)	Percentage
1.	Hindu	43	86.0
2.	Muslim	7	14.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that the majority 43 (86.0%) of the respondents identify as Hindu, while a small proportion 7 (14.0%) belong to the Muslim religion.

**Table - 4**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Education**



The above table indicates that two-fifths 20 (40.0%) of the respondents are illiterate. More than one-fourth 13 (26.0%) have completed middle school education, one-fifth 10 (20.0%) have attained high school level, and only a small proportion 7 (14.0%) have primary school education.

**Table - 5**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Caste**

Sl. No.	Caste	No. of Respondents (N*=50)	Percentage
1.	SC	13	26.0
2.	SCA	20	40.0
3.	BC	6	12.0
4.	MBC	11	22.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table reveals that two-fifths 20 (40.0%) of the respondents belong to the SCA category. More than one-fourth 13 (26.0%) are from the SC category, 11 (22.0%) are from MBC, and a small proportion 6 (12.0%) belong to the BC category.

**Table-6**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Marital Status**

Sl. No.	Marital Status	No. of Respondents(N*=50)	Percentage
1.	Married	22	44.0
2.	Unmarried	8	16.0
3.	Divorced	10	20.0
4.	Widowed	6	12.0
5.	Separated	4	8.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

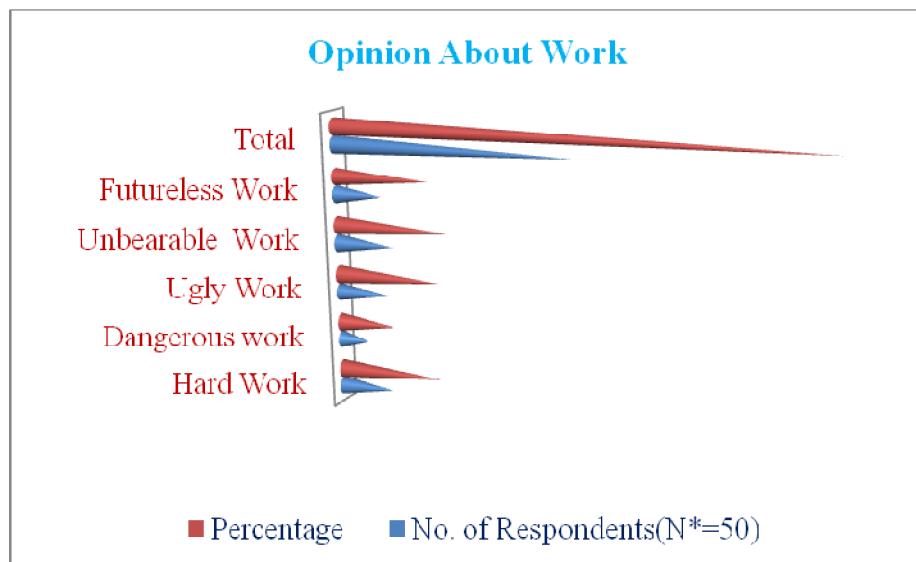
The table shows that less than half 22 (44.0%) of the respondents are married. One-fifth 10 (20.0%) are divorced, 8 (16.0%) are unmarried, 6 (12.0%) are widowed, and 4 (8.0%) are separated.

**Table-7**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Monthly Income**

Sl. No.	Monthly Income	No. of Respondents(N*=50)	Percentage
1.	5000-10000	8	16.0
2.	10000-15000	27	54.0
3.	15000-30000	15	30.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table shows that more than half 27 (54.0%) of the respondents earn between ₹10,000–₹15,000 per month. Nearly one-third 15 (30.0%) earn ₹15,000–₹30,000, and a small proportion 8 (16.0%) earn between ₹5,000–₹10,000.

**Table - 8**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Opinion about Work**



The above table indicates that nearly one-fourth 12 (24.0%) of the respondents consider scavenging an unbearable Work. Equal proportions 11 (22.0%) each consider it a hard or ugly Work. One-fifth 10 (20.0%) view it as a futureless Work, while a small proportion 6 (12.0%) describe it as dangerous work.

**Table - 9**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Equipment's**

Sl. No.	Equipments	No. of Respondents(N*=50)	Percentage
1.	Hand Glows	24	48.0
2.	Shoe	3	6.0
3.	Mask	23	46.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table shows that almost half 24 (48.0%) of the respondents use hand gloves, 23 (46.0%) use masks, and only 3 (6.0%) use shoes while working.

**Table - 10**  
**Distribution of Respondents of the Disease Affected**

Sl. No.	Disease Affected	No. of Respondents(N*=50)	Percentage
1.	Yes	33	66.0
2.	No	17	34.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The above table indicates that two-thirds 33 (66.0%) of the respondents reported being affected by diseases related to their occupation, while one-third 17 (34.0%) reported not being affected.

### **Conclusion:**

The contemporary study conclusion exposed scavengers consuming low socio-economic status because of their work environment and their society view for occupation prominence and low level of salary from their work places. Moreover, members of this occupational group should receive regular training on occupational health and safety programs, promotions for education, and vaccinations against certain infectious diseases. Focussing on the scavenger's alternative occupation, social and economic advancement, and health improvement is crucial for their sustainable development.

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