

EVALUATIVE STUDY ON ROLE OF CAMPUS MAINTENANCE WORKERS AND STUDENTS IN ENSURING CLEAN AND GREEN CAMPUS WITH SPECIFICATION TO STELLA MARIS COLLEGE

Atchaya Gaayathri.M.S¹, Dr. J. Maria Agnes Sasitha² and Dr. Shanmugapriya.S³

¹Research scholar, Department of Sociology, Stella Maris college, Chennai

²Head, Department of Sociology, Stella Maris college, Chennai

³Supervisor, Department of Sociology, Stella Maris college, Chennai

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ABSTRACT

Campus maintenance workers perform a precious service to their communities and are concerned with various responsibilities throughout the sanitation value chain. Campus maintenance workers in educational institutions carry out routine upkeep activities and heavy cleansing responsibilities. People give high importance to hygiene and cleanliness, but they forget that there is a person behind it. This research aims to identify the working conditions of the Campus maintenance workers in Stella Maris college in terms of work activities, health, safety and well-being, working time, their opinion about the student's participation in the cleanliness of the campus and to bring out the worker's needs, expectations and gratification towards the institution and the welfare measures taken by the institution. This study also aims to expose student's opinions about sanitation and the workers within this educational institution and to discuss the reasons for littering the campus. Interview method of data collection is used in this research. The results showed that the campus maintenance workers are socially secured, benefited by the facilities provided by the institution and they are content with their job and this institution but the student's behaviour in littering the campus needs to be addressed.

Keywords: Campus maintenance workers, Working conditions, Cleanliness, Sanitation, College.

INTRODUCTION

The wellbeing of humans is directly linked with sanitation; it means, by providing good sanitation measures, people can keep them self happy and healthy and can develop themselves and their society to lead happy, comfortable and a meaningful life. Sanitation is one of the most

crucial components of network well-being because it protects human health, extends lifestyles-spans and is documented to offer benefits to the economy. Thus, Sanitation is essential for survival and development. But this sanitation is not possibly acquired without the help of Campus maintenance workers. When we look into educational institutions, the aesthetic and physical environment of the campus is important for determining the physiological and psychological development of students and staff members. The sanitary workers in the educational institutions perform the cleaning activities in the campus, gardens, classrooms, toilets, residential halls, cooking area, dining hall, parking area, etc. These Campus maintenance workers undertake various challenges, facing health hazards, stigmatization, stress, inadequate salary, discrimination and lack of social security coverage, etc. Hence, this study aims to address the working conditions of Campus maintenance workers in Stella Maris college and addresses the student's opinion about the sanitary workers and the impact of clean and green campus.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To get a clear picture of the major studies of the subjects, relevant and important literature related to the research topic is referred to and reviewed for the secondary data.

Dr. Lourdes Poobala Rayen and T. Juliet Nisee(2016) Research on the Working Conditions of Sanitary Workers in Tirunelveli Corporation. The objective of the research was to study the nature of the job of the sanitary workers and to study the working condition of sanitary workers. The findings of the research revealed the nature of work done by the sanitary workers. The study also showed the working conditions of the sanitary workers and the problems faced by the sanitation workers. The study has also given the safeguard measures to solve the problems in the workplace such as providing equal rights like other government employees, Uplifting the underprivileged in terms of education, rights, power and employment, conducting ordinary medical camps, prevention of manual scavenging, growing attention about authorities schemes. Thus, the research has concluded by ensuring that these safeguard measures would truly enhance the quality of lifestyles of the sanitary workers.

Mission Paani (20 Dec 2021) News18, In the article, "A college for all-round development of sanitation workers", The sanitation workers responsible for keeping our cities clean often faced critical health issues. The manual cleansing of bathrooms, dealing with solid and liquid waste together with protection of sewerage structures exposed the sanitation workers to more fitness risks. Looking at the plight of sanitation workers in India, the British Health and Hygiene products giant, has launched several initiatives to elevate the conditions of this marginalized section of workers. Around 3200 sanitation employees were educated in the Toilet College in Aurangabad, Maharashtra in the first year of its establishment. Toilet College was established to provide sanitary workers with a decent life, access to basic rights and raise their self-esteem.

The college operated as an information sharing platform with a goal to uplift the lives of the sanitation employees. All the 3200 employees educated through the college have now been provided with placement with numerous organizations. The university educated hygiene workers about their rights, fitness hazards, technology use, and changes in livelihood skills. In this way, potentially hundreds of people have the opportunity to change their livelihoods, and by the end of the course, people may be eligible to secure jobs in reputable world, national and local organizations.

From the review of literature, it is identified that most of the research has been done on the sanitary workers but not specifically on the Campus maintenance workers. So, by spotting this research gap, this study aims to identify the working conditions of campus maintenance workers in Stella Maris college, their perspectives on student's participation in campus maintenance and their needs and expectations from the institution. This study has been formulated with the following methodology.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the working conditions of Campus maintenance workers in Stella Maris college.
- To understand the worker's perspective on student's participation in campus maintenance.
- To reveal the student's contribution towards a clean campus and their opinion about campus maintenance workers.
- To bring out the worker's needs, expectations and gratification towards the institution and the welfare measures taken by the institution.

METHODOLOGY

The research study uses descriptive research design for conducting the study. The study aims to understand and interpret the working conditions of campus maintenance workers and student's contribution towards the campus maintenance. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are used in this study.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The population for the study consists of Campus maintenance workers under the age category of 18-60 and the students of both shift 1 and shift 2. The sampling unit consists of Stella Maris college in Poes garden, Chennai. Probability sampling technique was employed for the selection of samples of both campus maintenance workers and students of the campus. For campus

maintenance workers, the samples for the study were selected using the Simple random sampling and the technique employed was the lottery method of sampling. For students, the samples for the study were selected using the Stratified sampling method where the population was divided into smaller groups called strata based on the blocks of the campus and samples were selected randomly from each block to represent the population.

SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size of the study is 80. The sample consists of 80 individuals, 40 out of 72 from the campus maintenance workers and 40 (3% of total population) from the students of both shifts and of different blocks of the campus. The sample for the population were selected on the basis certain criteria as follows,

TOOLS FOR STUDY AND DATA ANALYSIS

In order to identify the working conditions of Campus maintenance workers, an understanding of how each worker has the perspectives on their role set is important. For this purpose, the interview method of data collection was adopted. The interview schedule had both open and close ended questions. The samples include campus maintenance workers and students of Stella Maris college and each were interviewed with a different set of questions. The Coordinator and supervisor of the campus maintenance workers were also interviewed in order to understand their perspectives on both the workers and student's behaviour. Later, a cross-sectional research design was adopted to scrutinize the data and analyse and interpret the data to draw observations and put down the findings.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

Campus maintenance workers

The work allotment of the campus maintenance workers are divided according to the blocks of the campus. The works of the campus maintenance workers include sweeping the campus, cleaning classrooms, dusting windows and cupboards, garden works, bathroom cleaning, chapel works, etc. They work 8 hours a day and also on shift basis (Shift 1 - 7.30am to 3.30pm and Shift 2 - 10.00am to 6.00pm) and the workers have experience in this job from 3 years to 16 years. Most of the workers (43%) were jobless and remained at home before entering into this job. The reasons why the workers have taken up this job are they need to take care of their family and support themselves economically, there was less and no proper income in their previous jobs, loss of their spouse, etc. The workers have a regular salary and they have received income even during the Covid-19 lockdown period. They have an increment yearly once and bonus during some festivals. The income distribution is based on seniority, years of experience and type of

work they do. There is no insurance provided by the institution and the workers have 12 days paid leave in a year. The facilities which are provided to the workers by the institution are scholarship for their children's education, loans, PF system, the institution considers taking them back to work when they take leave for medical reasons, dress will be given once in a year, bonus, etc. Regarding the health condition, most of the workers (87%) did not face any critical health problems due to this work and some may have dust allergy, cold, eye irritation during the work. Regarding gender based issues, they do not feel anything bad about their gender specific role in taking up this job and there is a good sister-brother-hood relationship between male workers and female workers in the campus. According to the worker's perspective, only some of the students are helping out by playing their role in ensuring cleanliness of the campus. Many of them (80%) are ignorant, irresponsible and they do not consider the cleanliness of the campus. They are disappointed with the student's behavior of littering the campus and the message that the workers wanted to convey to the students is that they should be responsible for the cleanliness of the surroundings, the students should have courtesy towards them and they want the students to be their supportive hand in maintaining the cleanliness of the campus. Finally, when asking about their needs most of the workers (75%) want their income to be increased, some of them (20%) want the institution to permit them as permanent employees and some workers (5%) want to be given a uniform and ID card to be worn daily by all the workers which gives them a sense of pride and belonging. Then the Supervisor of the campus maintenance workers were also interviewed. They said that the workers are quite obliging, sincere, hard workers, ever ready to help, very familiar, available and generous. The Coordinator of the campus maintenance workers was also interviewed and they said that the campus maintenance workers are well cooperative, also added that some of the workers are not punctual and not effectively doing their work. Both the Supervisor and Coordinator monitors the work of the campus maintenance workers regularly and does the needful of the workers.

Student's Perspective

The study also focused on exploring students' perspectives on the cleanliness of the campus and the worker. On the cleanliness scale of the institution's campus, most of the students (45%) said that it is "Good", some of them (32%) said that it is "Average" and very few students (23%) said that it is "Poor". The areas that students felt that need to be improved in their block and campus are restrooms, places around OAT, classrooms, places around canteen and white hut which is the messiest place of the campus that students found, so they want the campus maintenance workers to clean these areas at a regular interval of time. Some students (78%) have given the reasons for littering on campus such as students being irresponsible, ignorant and not caring about the cleanliness of the campus, throwing of plastic bottles, food items, papers, etc, and dustbins in the campus was cited to lack at closer intervals which was listed by some of the students (22%).

Students feel that their levels of contributions towards cleanliness of the campus are by not littering the campus, disposing the wastes and sanitary pads properly, advising or reminding others not to litter and try to keep their surroundings clean. All the students who were interviewed did not know anything about the campus maintenance workers and their significant role in ensuring clean and green campus. As they do not try to interact with the workers, they are not aware of them and their working conditions. So, it would be very useful if the institution conducts an event about the Campus maintenance workers and it will be helpful for the students to know about the workers and their work nature and they might understand and try to do their role in ensuring a clean campus. The supervisor and the coordinator of the campus maintenance workers were also addressed about the students' behavior of littering the campus. Union and council representatives of the students were interviewed and they said that there is not much awareness among the students in the case of sanitation and cleanliness, so the council said that they have to address this serious issue and have to bring ideas and cooperative measures that eventually build up their responsibility in ensuring the cleanliness of the campus.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Campus maintenance workers

- The campus maintenance workers are working on a shift basis in this institution (Shift 1-7.30am to 3.30pm and Shift 2-10.00am to 6.00pm) and most of the campus maintenance workers have 5 to 10 years of experience in this job and institution.
- The campus maintenance workers have a regular salary and yearly increment. There are many facilities that are being provided to the workers by the institution such as Loans, Scholarship for children's education, PF system, bonus, etc.
- Regarding the health condition, most of the workers did not face any critical health problems due to this work. The campus maintenance workers did not face any gender abuses and issues as they are having a brotherhood relationship among the workers.
- There are such meetings conducted by the supervisor for the welfare of campus maintenance workers and they receive appreciation and recognition from the faculty for their work.
- According to the worker's perspective, most of the students did not have the responsibility in ensuring cleanliness of the campus. They felt very bad about the student's behaviour of littering the campus and they want the students to be their supportive hand in maintaining the cleanliness of the campus.

- The works of the campus maintenance workers are monitored by both the supervisor and the coordinator of the campus maintenance workers.
- The majority of the campus maintenance workers have addressed their need to get an increment in their salaries.

Student's Perspective

- On the cleanliness scale, most of the students have rated it as good and average.
- Students felt that there are some areas that need improvement in cleanliness.
- The students have given many reasons for littering on campus by blaming themselves.
- Students were also listed out their contributions towards the cleanliness of the campus.
- Most of the students who were interviewed did not know anything about the campus maintenance workers. So it is advisable to conduct an awareness campaign.
- The Supervisor and the coordinator of the campus maintenance workers were disappointed with the student's behaviour of littering the campus.
- The Union and Council representatives of the students felt that there is a need to conduct an awareness campaign regarding the campus maintenance workers and cleanliness of the campus.

CONCLUSION

This research study documents the nature of work done by campus maintenance workers of the Stella Maris college. It also reveals the worker's perspective on student's participation in campus maintenance and the student's contribution towards a clean campus and their opinion about campus maintenance workers. From this research, it is revealed that the workers have a good working environment, social security, regular salary, fair treatment, good relation with their fellow workers and facilities like loan, PF system, educational scholarship for their children, paid leave, maternity leave, bonus, etc. But most of the workers speak only about the positive aspects and they do not openly speak about the challenges they are facing as the interviews are conducted within the campus. According to the worker's perspective, only some of the students are helping out by playing their role in ensuring cleanliness of the campus and many of them are ignorant, irresponsible and they do not consider the cleanliness of the campus. The workers want the students to be responsible for the cleanliness of the surroundings and they want them to be their supportive hand in maintaining the cleanliness of the campus. As the interviews are

conducted during their working hours, some of the workers did not elaborate on their response as they felt it might disturb their work and this shows the work sincerity of the campus maintenance workers. The workers are grateful to the institution and they are feeling proud of being there but the only expectation that most of them were addressed is the increment of salary. Then the study also focused on the student's perspective of cleanliness of the campus and their contribution towards it. Many students realized that they themselves are the reasons for the litter in campus and some of them addressed the issue of lack of dustbins in the campus. When the students were asked about the campus maintenance workers most of the students who were interviewed did not know about them and their work nature. So, it is preferable to conduct an event about the campus maintenance workers and bring awareness about their working condition and it will definitely reflect in the minds of students about the workers and the cleanliness of the campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Possibility of campaigning by students to sensitize the need for a joint effort for ensuring clean and green campus.
- To organize panel discussions in the college with the campus maintenance workers as panelists. Hearing their stories in their own voice and the association of a real face with them instead of third party representative narratives will be much more powerful, relatable and humanized and will resonate better with listeners.
- The workers have job satisfaction and are highly satisfied with all the facilities provided by the institution. But some of the workers are expecting their salaries to be raised. So it is recommended to address the salary worry of the campus maintenance workers.
- The toilets of the campus need to be renovated. Though the workers kept on cleaning the toilets regularly, there might be a chance of malfunction of the taps or doors which would cause trouble.
- Need for improved WASH knowledge, attitudes and hygiene behaviors among students.

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