

FINDINGS REPORT

SANITATION WORKERS IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA (2021)

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In Collaboration with:



VIZHUTHUGAL
SOCIAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT TRUST



‘What do you want to see for your children and community in 5-10 years’ time?’

‘Sama mariyathai, velipunarvu, nalla kalvi’

‘Equal respect, awareness and good education’

(Survey Respondent, Erode, Tamil Nadu 2021)

CONTENTS

KEY TAKEAWAYS	4
RECOMMENDATIONS	6
1. PROJECT BACKGROUND	8
1.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	8
2. TAMIL NADU DATA COLLECTION	8
3. DATA ANALYSIS	9
3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	9
3.2. EDUCATIONAL DATA	11
3.2.1. <i>Children’s Education</i>	11
3.3. EMPLOYMENT DATA	13
3.3.1. <i>Type of Sanitation Work</i>	13
3.3.2. <i>Employment Arrangements</i>	14
3.3.3. <i>Worker Health and Safety</i>	18
3.4. ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS, SUPPORT & REHABILITATION	19
3.4.1. <i>Additional Jobs</i>	19
3.4.2. <i>Alternative Job Aspirations, Support and Challenges</i>	20
3.4.3. <i>Manual Scavenger Identification and Rehabilitation</i>	24
4. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY	28
5. REFERENCES	29
6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	30
7. APPENDIX (Questionnaire)	30

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Total Survey Responses.....	9
Table 2. Key Demographic Data	10
Table 3. Reasons for respondents’ children finding it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to access jobs in the subjects they studied*.....	12
Table 4. Who is your employer?*	15
Table 5. What are the reasons for the increase in work frequency and workload?*	17
Table 6. Survey Questions and Answers Relating to Worker Health and Safety.....	18
Table 7. How much money do you think you would need to start your business / enter into self-employment?.....	23
Table 8. What actions are you taking?*	27

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Reasons for respondents not completing or dropping out of education*	11
Figure 2. What type of ‘sanitation work’ do you do?*	13
Figure 3. Why did you enter this work?*	14
Figure 4. What is the location of your work?*	16
Figure 5. Do you get any of the following work benefits?*	17
Figure 6. What (additional) job or jobs do you do?*	20
Figure 7. What type of job do you want to enter or business do you want to start?*	21
Figure 8. What kind of support would be most helpful to you in entering a different job or starting a business?*	22
Figure 9. Who should provide this support?*	22
Figure 10. Reasons for not having any plan to enter a different job or start a business*	24
Figure 11. What type of support did you receive (government)?*	25
Figure 12. What support did you receive? (NGOs, activists or associations)*	26
Figure 13. What do you want to see for your children and community in 5-10 years’ time?*	27

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1. Children’s Educational Challenges (READ) – Dropping out of School.....	12
Box 2. Daily Life as a Sanitation Worker in Tiruppur District (Vizhuthugal).....	19

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Education:

- ❖ Over half (58.5%) of the 864 respondents had '*no formal education*' or '*primary school (I-IV)*' only. **Reasons for not completing education** included; '*needing to earn*', '*not interested*', '*cannot see future job opportunities*' and '*discrimination*'.
- ❖ Children of respondents who had completed their education (n=192) found it '***difficult***' or '***very difficult***' to access jobs in their subjects of interest, primarily due to job competition, bribes needed to access jobs, and further study being unaffordable.

Employment:

- ❖ Respondents undertake a range of tasks that involve **direct handling or management of human and solid waste**, from dry latrine cleaning to septic tank emptying. Even though manual scavenging is supposedly eliminated, it **continues under different job titles**, including 'sanitary worker' or 'cleaning worker'.
- ❖ **Reasons for entering sanitation work** primarily included; '*needed to earn*', '*not qualified for other work*', '*had no other options*' and '*born into it / hereditary*'.
- ❖ The majority of respondents were **employed by the 'Municipality or City Corporation'**, followed by '*contractors*' and '*private companies*', with some overlapping employment arrangements.
- ❖ Over half (54.3%) of all respondents **did not have a contract or work agreement**.
- ❖ **Municipal employees are paid more** (on average ₹ 25500 per month) than those employed by contractors and subcontractors, private companies (with wages especially low for this employer) or private households (on average ₹ 12500 per month).
- ❖ The vast majority of respondents (84.1%) reported that the **frequency and workload of sanitation work has increased over the last 5 years, primarily due to pressure from employers** (relating to the covid-19 pandemic and reasons other than covid-19). This increase has **not been met with appropriate work protections and benefits, which remain limited for the majority of respondents**.
- ❖ Only **26.6% of all respondents reported being part of any workers organisation**, including; '*Community Based Organisations (CBOs)*', '*unions*', '*Self-Help Groups (SHGs)*', '*informal associations*' (n=2) and '*cooperatives*'.
- ❖ A significant number of respondents believed that sanitation work is 'dangerous' (75.1%) and reported **sustaining an injury (n=583 or 67.5%) or illness (n= 740 or 85.7%)** from such work. Over a quarter of total respondents (38.4%) from different areas of Tamil Nadu **knew of someone who had died** doing sanitation work.

Alternative Livelihoods, Support and Rehabilitation:

- ❖ The majority of respondents (72.7%) did not have any plan to enter a different job or start a business. Jobs and potential businesses listed by those that *did* (27.3%) included; *'garments/textiles/tailoring'*, *'animal rearing'*, *'running a shop'*, *'driving three or four wheeler'*, *'agriculture'*, *'driving a car (taxi)'*, *'office worker/administrator'*, *'NGO worker'*, *'health worker'*, *'computing / IT / mobile or electrical'*.
- ❖ The support this 27.3% of respondents required to help them enter a different job or start a business included, primarily; *'vocational/skill development training'*, *'start-up capital (grant)'*, *'accessing loans'* and *'mentoring'* – **something that has received very limited attention**. The majority of respondents stated that the government should provide this support, followed by NGOs. The average capital (₹) participants believed would be required to set up different businesses is highlighted in Table 7.
- ❖ The main reasons for the 72.7% of respondents who did not have any plan to enter a different job or start a business included; *'cannot see any alternative job opportunities or options'*, *'no start-up capital'* and the *'need to earn now'*.
- ❖ **Over half of respondents (n=522 or 60.4%) stated that they had been identified as a 'manual scavenger'** (as per the 1993 and 2013 Acts). However, of the 522 participants who self-reported being identified under this category, **only 71 (13.6%) declared receiving any governmental support**, most commonly *'work safety equipment'*. Only 4 participants had received any vocational training.
- ❖ The majority of participants **believed that manual scavenging would still exist in 5-10 years' time** (n=617 or 71.4%), but an overwhelming majority stated that they **do not want their children to do sanitation work** (n=785 or 90.9%).
- ❖ In the future, respondents primarily wanted to see *'more children and youth entering different jobs'* and *'completing their education'*, *'more secure housing / land arrangements'* and *'improved work with better technology and protective equipment'*.
- ❖ Just under half of respondents (46%) stated that they are **taking actions themselves to bring about changes in their work and living arrangements**, including; *'lobbying local officials / politicians'*, *'lobbying employers'*, *'setting up our own organisation'*, *'public speaking'* and *'contacting media'*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey findings, experiences and priorities of Vizhuthugal and READ

Education:

- State and central government should provide quality **free education (e.g. scholarships) and resources (e.g. books, pens, uniforms, meals) to children of sanitary workers, including at higher education level** (e.g. master's degree) to deter dropouts and break the intergenerational cycle of certain caste communities re-entering sanitation work. Existing scholarships should also be paid in a timely manner, with fair and efficient implementation. Any student accommodation/hostels must also be of a high standard. Greater attention should be given to women and girls education, and reservations should be made for students and teachers from specific communities (e.g. Arunthathiyar) across educational institutions, to encourage fair representation and equal opportunity.
- State and central government schools should ensure a **discrimination free classroom** environment for children of manual scavengers. The teachers should be sensitive and ensure a bully free learning experience for those children via **teacher training and sensitisation** on caste discrimination and stigma. In cases where discrimination and abuse occurs, this should be investigated and documented properly (via fact-finding missions), with immediate action taken to address it. Schools should also have **adequate facilities** (water, electricity, toilets, learning resources – including positive stories about Dalit children and adults, and education about human rights) and enough qualified teachers to support children. For example, primary schools should have at least 5 classrooms and 6 teachers (but positions often remain unfilled for years). If dropouts occur, investigation is needed, and remedial actions taken. The state government should take immediate action to prevent dropouts among Dalit children.
- To deter complete disengagement with education among children who have dropped out of school, different options can be provided by the government and NGOs for **flexible, interim education and qualifications** (for example, non-formal education, vocational training, evening tuition centres – including for school going children needing extra support). Government, NGOs and civil society groups should also continue to encourage sanitary workers to **send their children to school**, and support them in this process. Efforts should also be made to improve relationships between teachers and parents via events/festivals/exhibitions and parent-teacher meetings.

Employment:

- State and central government should **obtain and use an appropriate budget for the purchase of machinery/equipment** to eliminate manual scavenging. This should be in addition to **health and safety training, higher wages and work benefits**, including; bonuses, pensions, healthcare and health insurance, parental leave, overtime, annual leave, sick pay etc. In addition, anyone employing manual scavengers illegally should

be **held accountable** under the 2013 Act. In cases of injuries, illness or death appropriate compensation and rehabilitation should be provided.

- State and central governments should more strictly **regulate and monitor of working conditions and wages in private companies, contractors and subcontractors** who continue to provide very low pay, benefits and job security to sanitation workers, and little to no safety protections. Fair shift patterns should also be provided to workers (especially women workers) to avoid overtime without pay and work exploitation. Ongoing efforts by NGOs and civil society groups to help **workers organise** via unions, CBOs, SHGs and cooperatives should also continue, with appropriate financial, capacity building, leadership and human rights training support provided.

Alternative Livelihoods, Support and Rehabilitation:

- State and central government should **re-survey manual scavengers** along with Dalit civil society organisations to identify who requires support, and provide appropriate budgetary support for **implementation of rehabilitation packages** (including vocational/skill development training). In Tamil Nadu, the state government should **reactivate the welfare board**, obtain and use funds to deliver welfare schemes to sanitary workers. The National *Safai Karamcharis* Finance and Development Corporation should also be reactivated to release loans and subsidies. The budgets should be used for the welfare of sanitation workers only (no other purpose). Stringent measures should be taken for any failure to implement laws and policies relating to manual scavenging, sanitation work and discrimination against Dalit communities.
- Ongoing efforts by NGOs and civil society groups to provide **skill development/vocational training and mentorship to youth** to enter different jobs (e.g. garments/tailoring, electrical repair, NGO or office work) should continue. State and central government should also provide **employment opportunities and vocational training / coaching centres** (linked to the National Scheme of Liberation and Rehabilitation of Scavengers and their Dependents) where sanitary workers live/residential areas, to encourage active uptake of schemes.
- State government, NGOs and civil society should run awareness campaigns clearly outlining the **different types of socio-economic support available** to sanitary workers and their families, as many do not know what is available and how to access it. **Counselling** should also be provided for workers to address mental health, including depression, anxiety and addiction linked to the challenging work/living environment.
- State and central government should provide **quality housing, land** (e.g. issuing free *patta* and ownership certificates for land holdings through the Revenue Department and Slum Clearance Department Board) **and services** (e.g. water, electricity, sanitation, telecommunications) to sanitary workers – they should not live in segregated, poorly serviced areas but be integrated into wider society.

1. GCRF PROJECT BACKGROUND

This research was conducted as part of a larger project (2019-21) titled ‘*Gender, Caste and Urban Sanitation: Exposing the Hidden Workforce in India and Bangladesh*’ funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund at the University of Sheffield, UK. This project was conducted in collaboration with WaterAid India, Bangladesh, UK, and local partner organisations in India and Bangladesh.

1.1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the project was to identify the ways in which sanitation workers can improve and/or move out of hazardous and degrading forms of sanitation work – **specifically pit latrine, septic tank, drain and sewer cleaning and emptying** – in urban areas (small towns and large cities). The dire working conditions of sanitation workers – men, women and children engaged in the handling and management of faecal matter – are gaining increasing attention in research, policy and practice. The challenges facing workers such as poor health and safety; low, irregular pay and limited access to finance, social stigma and discrimination, are increasingly well documented, leading to calls for the promotion of decent work, skill development and rehabilitation across the sector (WHO 2018; World Bank 2019; Zaqout et al 2020). Despite progress, hazardous and degrading forms of sanitation work, such as manual scavenging, persist in many countries, including India, where it remains largely unseen and unheard by planners, politicians and wider society (Prasad and Ray 2019). Within this setting, greater understanding is needed of the intersections between **gender, caste, religion and livelihoods** in shaping pathways into and out of degrading forms of sanitation work. The project will develop recommendations on pathways to exit degrading manual sanitation work, in collaboration with local partner organisations, to be shared via global forums, and regionally across South Asia, where sanitation work persists as a caste-based occupation.

2. TAMIL NADU DATA COLLECTION

In addition to qualitative fieldwork in Bangladesh (March 2020), Dr Cawood has worked with colleagues across India (including Delhi, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu), to examine the working conditions, educational opportunities and alternative livelihood options for sanitation workers and their families. **This report** outlines key findings from *quantitative* survey data collected via [KoBo Toolbox](#) with Dr Prasad and community enumerators from two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) Vizhuthugal and READ in Tamil Nadu, who work closely with sanitation workers, and wanted to gather data on education and skill development, to guide their ongoing advocacy and programming. After training enumerators to use KoBo Collect software (downloaded onto smartphone devices) and adhere to ethics¹ and covid-19 safety protocols, data collection took place over a 3-4 week period in March 2021.

¹ Ethical approval was obtained from the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, University of Sheffield, UK. Informed consent was obtained verbally from respondents at the start of the survey, and recorded in KoBo.

KoBo surveys based on a structured questionnaire ([Appendix 1](#)) lasting on average 5-30 minutes², were conducted in the working areas of Vizhuthugal and READ, including the Districts of Tiruppur, Erode, Coimbatore, Salem, Tiruvanamalai and Dharmapuri, where sanitation workers live in designated colonies or low-income settlements. Men and women over 18 and up to 60 years of age involved in the handling of human waste were targeted for participation. However, with a significant overlap between the handling of human and solid waste, a notable number of survey respondents were also involved in solid waste collection and sorting (elaborated in section 3.3.1).

3. DATA ANALYSIS

In total, six enumerators (three from Vizhuthugal and three from READ) were involved in data collection, with support from a coordinating team and Drs Prasad and Cawood. **Table 1** presents the total number of survey responses collected (n=864), and section 3.1 elaborates on the demographic data of respondents. All survey responses were analysed in KoBo and excel. The following sections summarise the data and emerging findings.

Table 1. Total Survey Responses

Organisation Name	Surveys
Vizhuthugal	441
READ	423
TOTAL	864

3.1. DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Table 2 summarises key demographic data of the respondents. As indicated, over half of respondents were male. The vast majority were **married, and educated below High School level (VII to X)**, with around 30% of respondents stating they had ‘*no formal education*’. A large number of respondents (62.2%) self-identified as being part of the **Arunthathiyar community**. Out of the 864 respondents, the vast majority (n=704 or 81.5%) had a **caste certificate**³. However, out of this number, **41.2% mentioned that obtaining these certificates was ‘difficult’ and 18.1% ‘very difficult’**. In addition, 55% of this group (475 out of 704) stated that they had to pay a fee for the certificates, ranging from ₹ 100⁴ to ₹ 1500, with an average of ₹ 400.

² Certain questions were coded in KoBo to automatically lead to follow up questions. For example, if participants selected they do not have children, the survey would skip over follow-up questions on children’s education. The answers given would therefore determine length of survey.

³ Caste certificates can be used as proof of caste identity (especially for those falling under the scheduled caste categorisation) to obtain targeted state benefits, including job and educational opportunities or social security.

⁴ At the time of analysis, Rs. 100 (INR) equated to approximately \$ 1.30 (USD).

Table 2. Key Demographic Data

Category	Responses (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
<i>Male</i>	507	58.7
<i>Female</i>	357	41.3
Age		
<i>20-30 years</i>	72	8.3
<i>31-40 years</i>	288	33.3
<i>41-50 years</i>	374	43.3
<i>51-60 years</i>	130	15.1
Marital Status		
<i>Married</i>	722	83.6
<i>Single</i>	65	7.5
<i>Widowed</i>	44	5
<i>Separated</i>	25	2.9
<i>Divorced</i>	8	1
Level of Education		
<i>No formal education</i>	261	30.2
<i>Primary School (I to IV)</i>	244	28.2
<i>Middle Primary (VI to VII)</i>	164	19
<i>High School (VII to X)</i>	95	11
<i>Pre-University (XI to XII)</i>	81	9.4
<i>Vocational Training/Diploma</i>	16	1.9
<i>Master's Degree</i>	2	0.2
Community Self-Identity (Caste)⁵		
<i>Arunthathiyar</i>	538	62.2
<i>Paraiyar</i>	141	16.3
<i>Pallur</i>	66	7.6
<i>Kaattu Naiker</i>	37	4.3
<i>Kuravar</i>	37	4.3
<i>Panniandi</i>	30	3.5
<i>Other (specify)</i>	15 ⁶	1.9

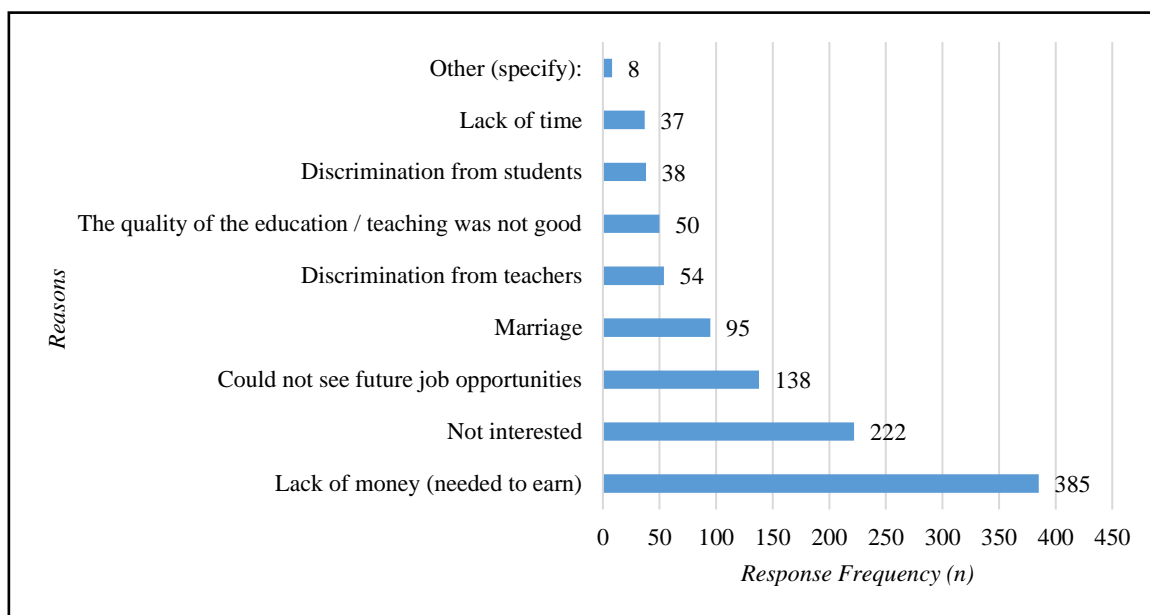
⁵ All fall under the scheduled caste category as per the Indian constitution.

⁶ Including 12 respondents self-identifying as 'Adi Dravida' (under Paraiyar).

3.2. EDUCATIONAL DATA

A priority for Vizhuthugal and READ is to examine access to education for sanitation workers and their children, as a key way in which to exit hazardous and degrading sanitation work. The survey results indicated that sanitation workers who had ‘no formal education’ or ‘primary school (I to IV) only’ (n=505, 58.5% of total respondents), had a **range of reasons for not completing or dropping out of education early**, summarised in **Figure 1**. As indicated, the **biggest driver was ‘lack of money (needed to earn)’ (n=385), followed by ‘not interested’ (n=222) and ‘could not see future job opportunities’ (n=138)**. ‘Discrimination from teachers’ (n=54) and ‘students’ (n=38) was also mentioned, alongside ‘family issues’ and ‘family ill-health’ under ‘other (specify)’.

*Figure 1. Reasons for respondents not completing or dropping out of education**



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

3.2.1. Children’s Education

Of the respondents that had children (n=723 out of 799⁷), 59.1% stated that they were ‘in school’ (n=427) whereas 40.9% stated that they were ‘not in school’ (n=296). Reasons for not having children in school were predominantly due to having older children who ‘had completed their education’ (n=192 out of 296), or younger children who were ‘not of school going age’ (n=53). However, other important reasons for non-attendance included ‘lack of money for educational expenses (e.g. travel, food, books, uniforms)’ (n=36), that ‘children needed to work to support the family’ (n=28), ‘could not see future job opportunities’ (n=10) or were ‘not interested’ (n=8). **Box 1** outlines the challenge of dropouts, as told by staff at READ.

⁷ On the advice of READ and Vizhuthugal, this question was not asked to those who identified as ‘single’ (n=65), to avoid any potentially sensitive conversations.

Box 1. Children’s Educational Challenges (READ) – Dropping Out of School

In addition to the survey data collected, READ staff shared that, in the Arunthathiyar (caste) communities they work with, around ¾ of children are attending school, but ¼ are not. School dropouts are more common in rural compared to urban areas, and among boys compared to girls. Many dropouts become child labourers, including bonded labour in agricultural jobs with a meagre income and unsafe working conditions. In rural areas, dropouts can occur at any time up to standard 8, whereas in urban areas dropouts often occur after standard 8. Dropouts usually occur at age 13 and below. Influence from peer groups, negative teacher attitudes towards children and parents, poor quality teaching/lack of adequate teachers, inadequate school facilities and teaching materials, negative attitudes towards education among parents and inadequate housing facilities (e.g. lack of lighting, living space, no separate toilet, electricity) are all reasons for children dropping out of school. In rural areas especially, families give less priority to education due to financial need. Parents also have little time to spend supporting children in their education due to the adverse nature of their working hours and community festivals/functions. They also have limited exposure to education (including interactions with teachers) and so aspirations and expectations of education are low. Parents and children are not fully aware of the government sponsored schemes and financial assistance for self-employment, and do not know the formalities to obtain them. Some children get trapped and do not see any future opportunities through education or otherwise, leading some into substance abuse and delinquency. See ‘*recommendations*’ for improving education (p6)

We also asked parents of children who had ‘*completed their education*’ (n=192) to elaborate on whether it was ‘*easy or difficult for them to find a job in the subject they studied, on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult)*’. Crucially, **only 2 respondents stated it was ‘easy’, with the majority stating ‘difficult’ (n=107) or ‘very difficult’ (n=67)** and the remaining stating ‘*neutral/cannot say*’ (n=16). Those who answered ‘*difficult*’ and ‘*very difficult*’ (n=174) were asked ‘*why*’ this was the case. **Table 3** summarises the answers.

Table 3. Reasons for respondents’ children finding it ‘difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to access jobs in the subjects they studied*

Reasons	Response Frequency (n)
Too much job competition	101
Bribes needed to access jobs	98
More education or training needed first (unaffordable)	90
Caste discrimination	82
No jobs advertised	48
Living place/address discrimination	30
Gender discrimination	5
Other	1

**Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.*

As indicated, ‘**too much job competition**’ was a major challenge, as well as ‘*bribes needed to access jobs*’, ‘*more education or training needed first (unaffordable)*’ and ‘*discrimination*’ according to caste, living place and/or gender. These results highlight the **challenge for**

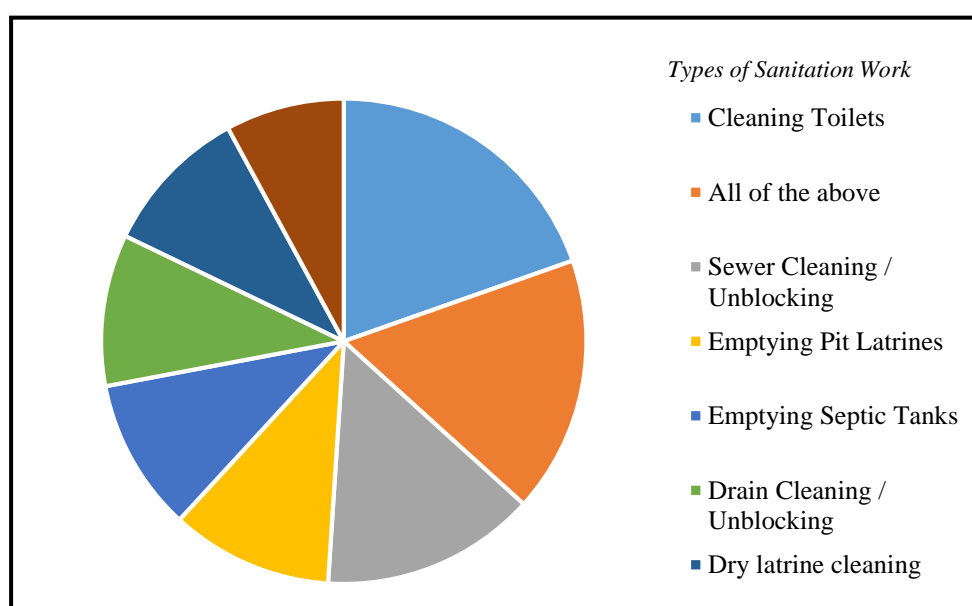
educated young people to enter into employment linked to their subjects of interest, reflecting broader challenges to enter alternative employment opportunities, outside of sanitation work. Despite these challenges, the majority of parents with children in school at the time of the survey (365 out of 427, or 85.5%) reported receiving **some form of short-term educational support** from the local government or NGOs. This support included; *‘free uniforms’* (n=313), *‘free books’* (n=309), *‘free school meals’* (n=268), *‘one-off educational grants’* (n=113), *‘fee waiver or reduced fees’* (n=62), *‘regular stipends’* (n=53) and *‘other’* (n=11). Those that *‘did not receive educational support’* (n=62) noted that this was largely due to *‘no support being offered’* (n=25), attempts to obtain support *‘being blocked’* (n=23), including via *‘corruption’* (n=3), or uncertainly over *‘how to get it’* (n=16).

3.3. EMPLOYMENT DATA

3.3.1. Type of Sanitation Work

This section focuses on type of sanitation work, employment arrangements and working conditions of the respondents. **Figure 2** summarises the **different types of sanitation work undertaken by the respondents**. As indicated, the majority of respondents were involved in *‘cleaning toilets’* (n=312), *‘all of the above’* (n=272) (meaning all different types of human waste cleaning and management), *‘sewer cleaning / unblocking’* (n=228), *‘emptying pit latrines’* and *‘septic tanks’* (taken together, n=334) and *‘drain cleaning/unblocking’* (n=161). Despite being illegal (as per the Manual Scavenging Acts, 1993 and 2013) and supposedly eradicated, *‘dry latrine cleaning’* was also mentioned (n=158). The majority of work reported under *‘other (specify)’* (n=126) related to **solid waste collection, sorting and recycling (including driving collection trucks), as well as road sweeping and general cleaning work** in the local area, in the municipality, private hospitals, homes, marketplaces, factories and offices (see section 3.3.2 for further details on work locations).

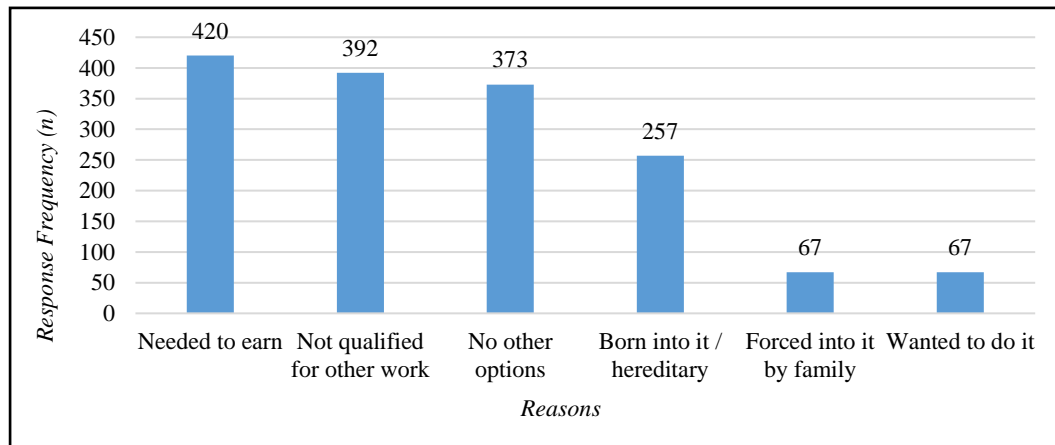
Figure 2. What type of ‘sanitation work’ do you do?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

When asked **why they entered this work** (Figure 3), the majority of respondents stated that they *'needed to earn'* (n=420), were *'not qualified for other work'* (n=392) or had *'no other options'* (n=373). A large number also stated that they were *'born into it / hereditary'* (n=257). Only a small number of respondents mentioned that they *'wanted to do it'* (n=67). Some also highlighted that they were *'forced into it by family'* (n=67). Indeed, some respondents reported entering into this work at the school-going ages of 13, 14, 15 and 16, with the average age for those to start sanitation work being 26-30 years.

Figure 3. Why did you enter this work?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

3.3.2. Employment Arrangements

Table 4 summarises where the respondents were employed as sanitation workers at the time of survey. A large number reported being employed by the *'Municipality or City Corporation'* (n=488) as well as *'contractors'* (n=351) and *'private companies'* (n=167). As indicated by the multiple responses, **participants could have a range of different employers (and employment arrangements)**, including self-employment, indicating a high level of overlap between categories. *'Other (specify)'* also included *'gram panchayat'* (rural administrative) offices, *'shop owners'*, *'medical institutes'*, a *'hospital'* and *'company boss'*.

The majority of respondents (n=512) reported being paid based on a daily rate, ranging from ₹ 100 to 1000, with ₹ 300 per day most frequently mentioned. Those that reported being paid on a monthly rate (n=285) received on average ₹ 25000 per month, ranging from ₹ 7000-7500 for cleaning toilets at a private company or in private homes to ₹ 43,000 per month for conducting different types of sanitation work all over the local area as a Municipal employee. Supporting previous studies (Iyer 2020), our survey indicates that **Municipal employees are paid more (on average ₹ 25500 per month) and receive further benefits than those employed by contractors and subcontractors, private companies (with wages especially low for this employer) or private households (on average ₹ 12500 per month)**, though this varied according to the work type, frequency, contract arrangement and specific employer. For example, respondents cleaning toilets for the Municipality only might receive ₹ 8000 per month, whereas respondents conducting different types of sanitation work for the Municipality or contractors might receive up to ₹ 43,000 per month. There is an apparent **gender divide** in

these figures, with female respondents more likely to clean toilets (including dry latrines) and drains for private households, companies and Municipal authorities at **lower wages than male counterparts**. The remaining respondents who were paid per job (n=67) (for example, one-off septic tank cleaning – most commonly employed by contractors, private companies or households) received on average ₹ 450 per call out, ranging from ₹ 300-600.

*Table 4. Who is your employer?**

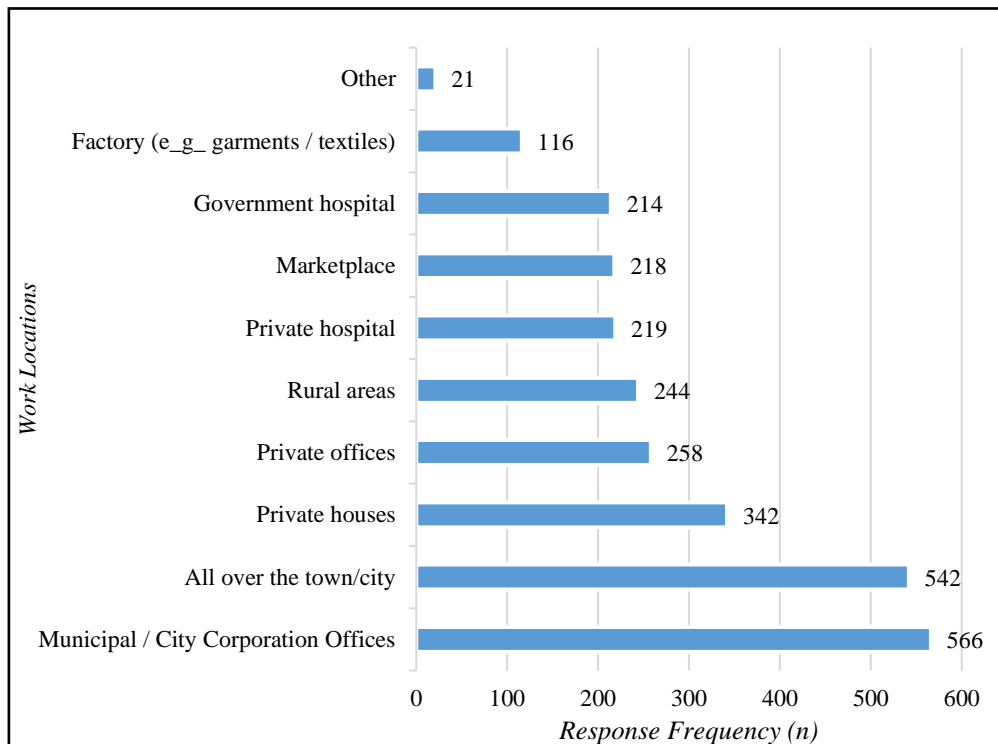
Employer	Response Frequency (n)
Municipality / City Corporation	488
Contractor	351
Private Company	167
Private homeowners	92
Other (specify)	19
Subcontractor	17
Self-employed	10
Informal ⁸	2

**Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.*

When asked if respondents had a 'job title or designation', the vast majority (n=612 or 70.8%) stated that they did, while the remainder (n=252 or 29.2%) did not. The most common job titles included; 'cleaning staff' or 'cleaning worker', 'sweeper', 'sanitary worker', 'toilet cleaner', 'cleaning driver' and 'road scavenger'. Out of the 864 respondents, **just over half (n=469 or 54.3%) stated that they did not have a work contract or agreement**. Of those that stated that they did have a contract or agreement (n=395 or 45.7%), the vast majority (n=356) stated that this was a 'signed contract with employers', while the rest had a 'verbal agreement only' (n=33) or 'other' arrangement (n=6), the terms of which were unclear. Out of the 395 respondents that had a contract or agreement, the majority had a 'permanent' arrangement (n=331) (indicating regular employment), with the rest working in 'fixed-term' (n=37), 'daily labour' (irregular, n=19), 'part-time' (n=7) or 'other' (n=1) employment arrangements. A follow up question for those with 'fixed-term' and 'part-time' contracts or agreements (n=44) was about the duration in months or years. Responses indicated that these arrangements varied from 10 months to 6 years. We also asked where the respondents worked / the area that they served. Acknowledging that respondents would likely work in multiple locations, this question again enabled multiple answers, summarised in **Figure 4**.

⁸ Whilst listed separately here, this category likely overlaps with many others listed in Table 4, with highly informal work arrangements across employment types (e.g. informal subcontracting).

Figure 4. What is the location of your work?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

As shown in **Figure 4**, the majority of respondents reported working at ‘*Municipal or City Corporation Offices*’ (n=566) or ‘*all over the town/city*’ (n=542). Many also worked in ‘*private houses*’ (n=342) or ‘*offices*’ (n=258) as well as hospitals, marketplaces and factories. Out of the 864 respondents, the majority worked ‘*daily*’ (n=577 or 66.8%), while the rest undertook sanitary work on a ‘*monthly*’ (n=225 or 26%), ‘*fortnightly*’ (n=5 or 0.6%) or ‘*not regular (as and when required)*’ basis (n=57 or 6.6%). Importantly, when asked whether the ‘*frequency and workload had increased or decreased over the past five years*’, the **vast majority of respondents (n=727 or 84.1%) highlighted an ‘increase’**, with the rest stating ‘*unchanged*’ (n=113 or 13.1%), ‘*not sure*’ (n=21 or 2.4%) and **only three respondents (0.4%) noting a ‘decrease’** due to the introduction of ‘*new technology*’ reducing the need for manual work (in this instance sewer cleaning machines) or ‘*personal illness*’. **Table 5** outlines the reasons given for the increase in frequency and workload.

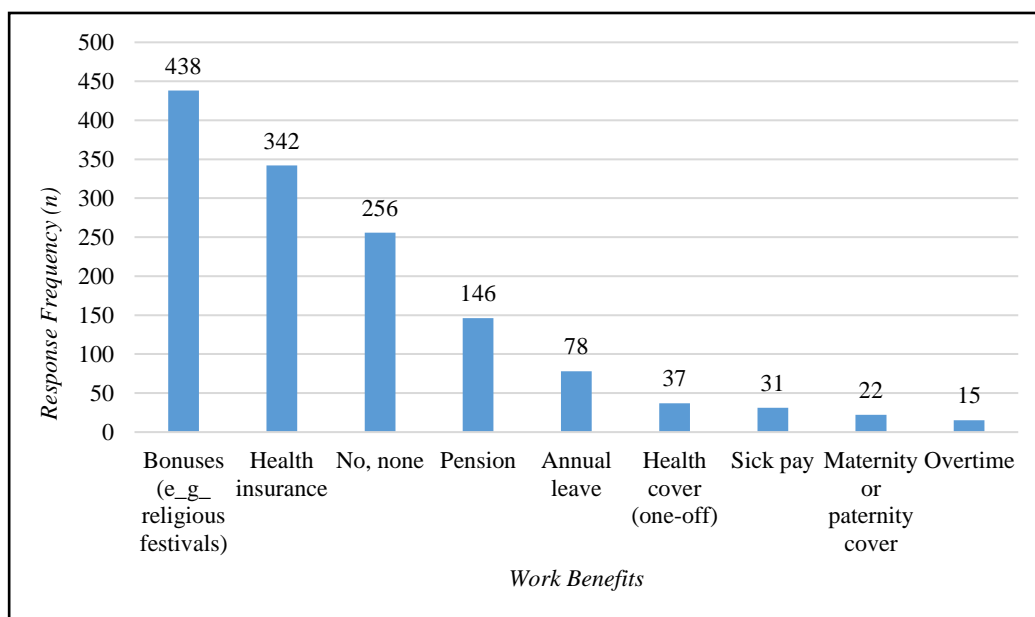
Table 5. What are the reasons for the increase in work frequency and workload?*

Reasons	Response Frequency (n)
My employer demands more shifts due to Covid-19	577
My employer demands more shifts (for reasons other than Covid-19)	340
There are not enough workers so we have more work to do	296
There is more demand from households or customers	194
I need to earn more so have taken more shifts	112
Other (specify)	1

**Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.*

As shown, **covid-19 (and the increased volume of waste, including hospital waste) placed additional burden on sanitation workers**, although many were already placed under intense pressure in the workplace by employers. Many respondents also reported that there are ‘*not enough workers so we have more work to do*’, or taking on ‘*more shifts*’ to earn. The ‘*other (specify)*’ related to increased work pressure brought about by the **election campaign period in Tamil Nadu, taking place at the time of the survey**. These findings corroborate existing evidence suggesting that sanitation workers are at the frontline of the covid-19 response, but often lack the adequate protections (Salve and Jungari 2020; WaterAid 2020; Patwary et al 2021). In order to understand working conditions better, we also asked respondents about **work benefits**. **Figure 5** summarises the benefits that respondents reported getting from employers.

Figure 5. Do you get any of the following work benefits?*



**Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.*

Whilst a large number of respondents reported getting ‘bonuses’ (n=438, for example, around religious festivals), and some reported having ‘health insurance’ (n=342) and ‘pensions’ (n=146) – predominantly among those with permanent contracts – a significant number also reported ‘no benefits’ (n=256). Very few respondents also reported receiving any ‘annual leave’ or holiday periods (n=78), ‘sick pay’ (n=31), ‘maternity or paternity cover’ (n=22) or ‘overtime’ (n=15), indicating that even though work intensity has increased, work benefits remain limited and unequally distributed. Bargaining collectively for any improved work arrangements would also be challenging for our respondents, with the **majority (n=634 or 73.4%) stating that they are not part of any workers organisation**. Those that were part of an organisation (n=230 or 26.6%) were part of ‘Community Based Organisations (CBOs)’ (n=103), ‘unions’ (n=91), ‘Self-Help Groups (SHGs)’ (n=49), ‘informal associations’ (n=2), ‘cooperatives’ (n=1) and ‘other’ (n=1).

3.3.3. Worker Health and Safety

In addition to gathering data on employment arrangements, we asked all respondents about work health and safety, including injuries, illnesses and deaths relating to sanitation work. When asked if sanitation work is ‘dangerous’, the majority of respondents (n= 649 or 75.1%) replied ‘yes’ (Table 6). Confirming this point, **67.5% (n=583) of respondents reported sustaining an injury relating to sanitation work**, ranging from ‘cuts and bruises on hands or feet’ (most commonly reported), ‘falling down’ and ‘breaking bones’ to being ‘bitten by dogs’, and a range of other (unspecified) injuries. **A significant majority of respondents (n= 740 or 85.7%) reported getting sick from sanitation work**, and knew others who had sustained injuries (79.6%) or become sick (81.5%). Sickesses included ‘back pain / body pain’ (most commonly reported), ‘headaches’, ‘skin problems/allergies’, ‘gas/acidity’, ‘eye problems’ and a range of other (unspecified) illnesses.

Table 6. Survey Questions and Answers Relating to Worker Health and Safety

Survey Question	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
Do you think sanitation work is dangerous?	649	75.1	215	24.9
Have you ever been injured doing sanitation work?	583	67.5	281	32.5
Do you know anyone who was injured during sanitation work?	688	79.6	176	20.4
Have you ever been sick because of sanitation work?	740	85.7	124	14.3
Do you know anyone who fell sick because of sanitation work?	704	81.5	160	18.5
Do you know of anyone who died doing sanitation work?	332	38.4	532	61.6

Crucially, **over a quarter of total respondents (38.4%), from different areas of Tamil Nadu, reported that they knew of someone who had died doing sanitation work**. As communities are well connected and ‘sewer deaths’⁹ have received increasing media attention in recent years, these responses may relate to specific high-profile incidents within and outside Tamil Nadu

⁹ Manual scavenging deaths are commonly referred to as ‘sewer deaths’ when the cause of death is most commonly drowning or asphyxiation in septic tanks.

(this is not clear). However, it is alarming that such a high number of people knew of a sanitation worker death, ranging from being aware of 1 to 18 cases of such deaths. This supports the reality that Tamil Nadu consistently has the highest incidences of ‘sewer deaths’ from manual scavenging across the country. During fieldwork, colleagues in Vizhuthugal also shared the case of a sanitation worker in Madurai who had **committed suicide due to not receiving wages from the Municipal contractor** (DevDiscourse 2021) – an all too common yet underreported occurrence among sanitation workers (India Times 2018; The Indian Express 2020; FirstPost 2021), with **mental health** (depression, anxiety) receiving limited attention from government, NGO and other support agencies. **Box 2** summarises an interview conducted by Vizhuthugal (during the survey period) with a female sanitation worker. She shares some of the challenges faced in daily working life.

Box 2. Daily Life as a Sanitation Worker in Tiruppur District (Vizhuthugal)

Cleaning workers go to work by 5am at dawn. Female sweeping workers are involved in road cleaning, house-to-house garbage collection, and sometimes cleaning sewers, recycling garbage and composting. My husband has worked for the Municipal Corporation for 20 years. He cleans sewers, and collects garbage in a lorry. His father also did this work. Sanitary workers hired by contractors do not get adequate pay or any employment benefits, such as leisure time and vacations. This makes female sanitary, cleaning and sweeper workers depressed and prone to a variety of ailments such as high blood pressure and diabetes. Male manual scavengers in the area are addicted to alcohol to avoid the stench when they go down the drain and are mentally unwell. We work hard to educate our children, the only option is for children to pursue higher education and move onto other careers. Organisations such as Vizhuthugal are currently working in the area to help educate our children, provide career guidance, health and safety awareness programmes and training.

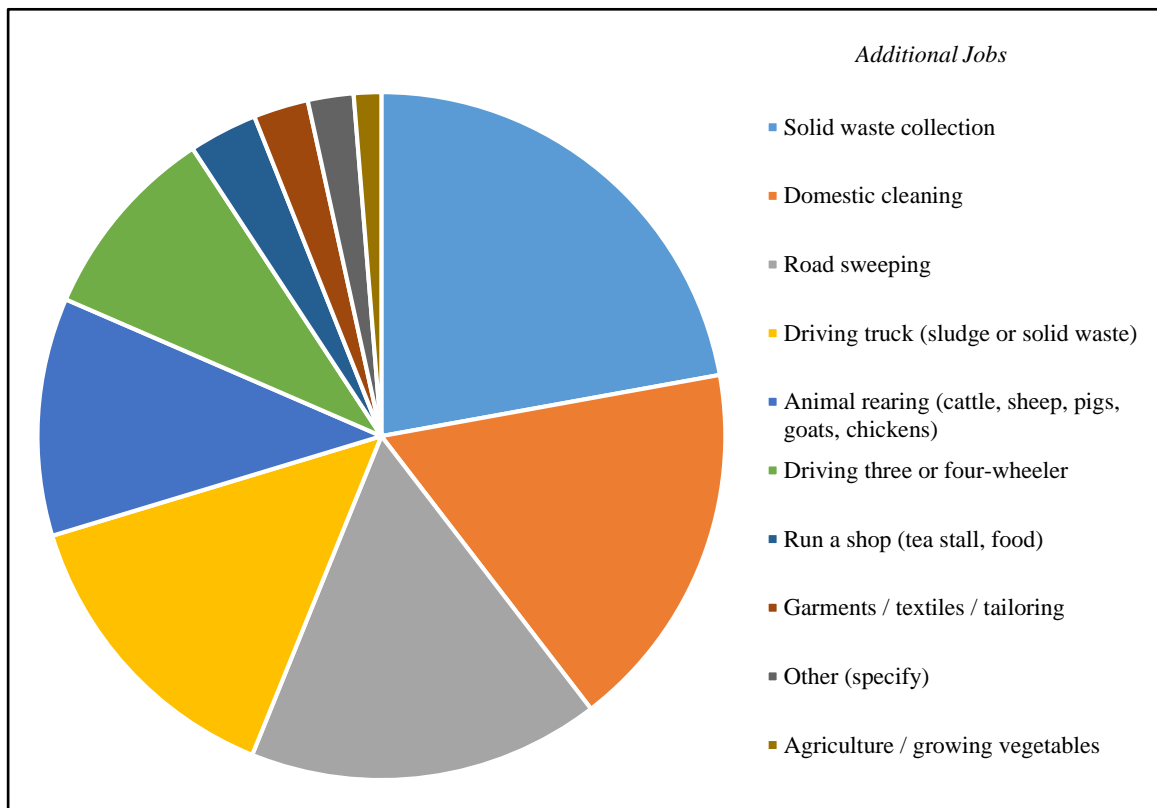
3.4. ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS, SUPPORT & REHABILITATION

This section focuses on other jobs that the respondents undertake, potential alternative livelihood options (outside of hazardous sanitation work), and support available and required for effective rehabilitation.

3.4.1. Additional Jobs

Whilst the majority of respondents did not do additional work to the sanitation work highlighted in section 3.3.1, **39.1% (n=338) stated that they did additional jobs to the ones mentioned**. As indicated in **Figure 6**, the majority of those with additional jobs were involved in ‘*solid waste collection*’, ‘*domestic cleaning*’, ‘*road sweeping*’ and ‘*truck driving (sludge or solid waste)*’, **all of which can still be classed under (caste-based) sanitation or cleaning work**. The ‘*other (specify)*’ responses also related to sanitation work, including toilet cleaning in offices, schools, solid waste collection, sorting and recycling, sewer cleaning and ‘*pit work*’. However, some respondents also stated that they ‘*rear animals (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)*’, ‘*drive a three or four wheeler*’ (taxi), ‘*run a shop (tea stall / food)*’ and ‘*grow vegetables*’. Whilst these jobs may not bring significant income, or be for personal sustenance only (potentially the case with animal rearing or agriculture), they demonstrate that other livelihood options are possible in a competitive job environment.

Figure 6. What (additional) job or jobs do you do?*



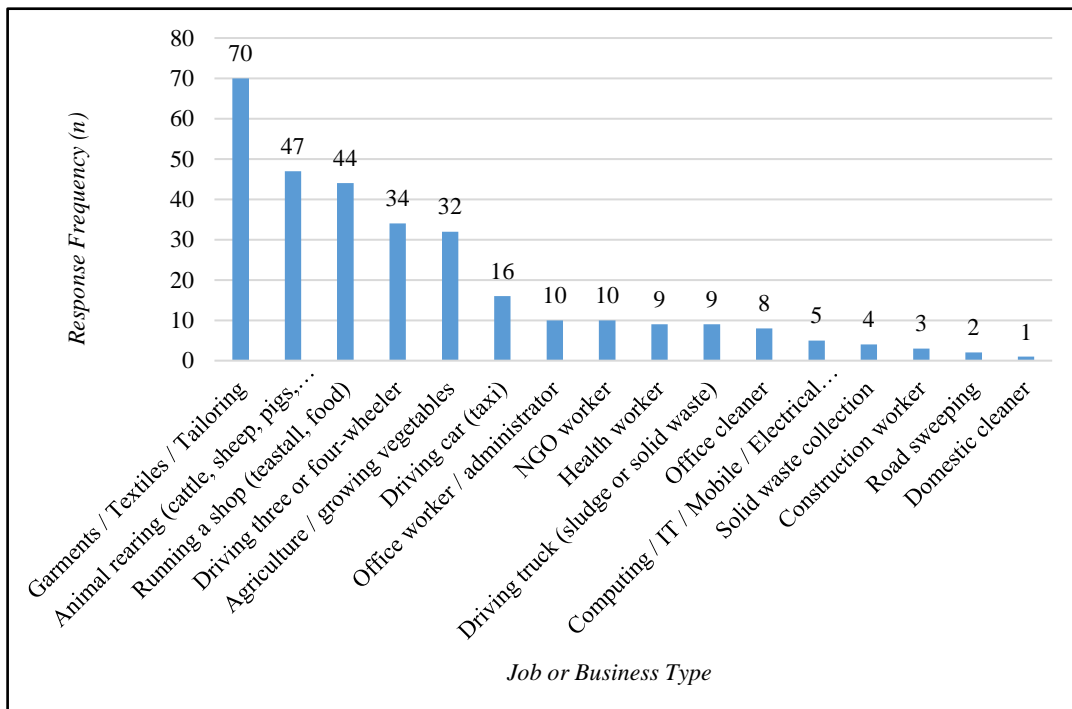
**Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.*

To ensure we captured all of the additional types of work, we then asked a differently worded question: ‘do you have any additional sources of income, in addition to the jobs mentioned’? This revealed new information. Out of the 864 respondents, only 54 (6%) replied ‘yes’, but additional income sources in this group included; ‘tailoring’ (most commonly mentioned), ‘rent from tenants’ (indicating some house owners), ‘childcare’, ‘interest from moneylending/providing loans’ (a common practice as formal finance mechanisms are often inaccessible) and, more rarely, ‘selling homebrew (alcohol)’. Other responses under ‘other (specify)’ included a ‘government (income) support scheme’, ‘home drain cleaning’, ‘pension’ scheme, ‘part time driver’, ‘livestock’ and ‘homework’ (domestic cooking or cleaning).

3.4.2. Alternative Job Aspirations, Support and Challenges

We also asked participants if they had **any plan to enter a different job or start a business**. The majority of respondents (n=628 or 72.7%) stated that ‘**no**’, they do not have any such plan, with only 27.3% (n=236) stating ‘yes’. **Figure 7** summarises the different types of jobs or businesses that this group aspired to work in or establish. Whilst some of the respondents still referred to sanitation work (such as office cleaner or solid waste collection), the majority of responses **referred to jobs in other sectors**, including; ‘garments/textiles/tailoring’ (a significant employer in Tamil Nadu), ‘driving a car (taxi)’, ‘office worker/administrator’, ‘NGO worker’, ‘health worker’, ‘computing / IT / mobile or electrical’.

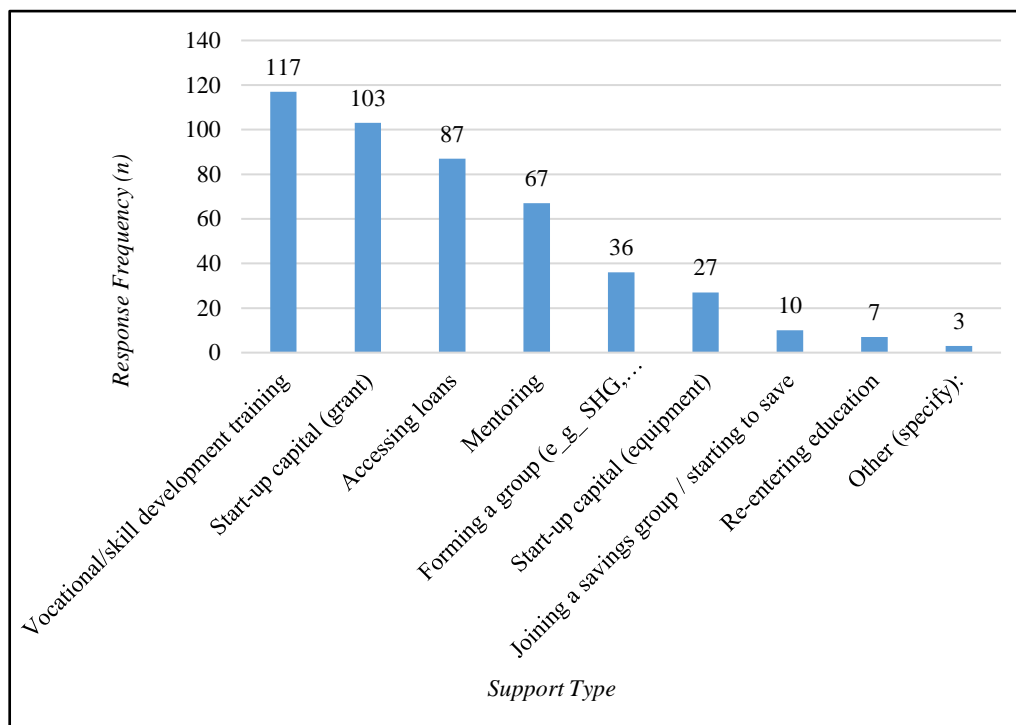
Figure 7. What type of job do you want to enter or business do you want to start?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

We asked respondents **what type of support they would require to enter a different job or start a business.** Figure 8 summarises the responses. The priorities included; ‘*vocational/skill development training*’ (most frequently mentioned), ‘*start-up capital (grant)*’ (elaborated below), ‘*accessing loans*’ and ‘*mentoring*’ – **something that has received especially limited attention to date** (i.e. role models or coaches to build confidence and offer practical advice). Other support included ‘*forming a group (self-help group, cooperative, CBO)*’, ‘*start-up capital (equipment)*’, ‘*joining a savings group / starting to save*’ and ‘*re-entering education*’. The ‘*other (specify)*’ responses again related to cash assistance and loan support.

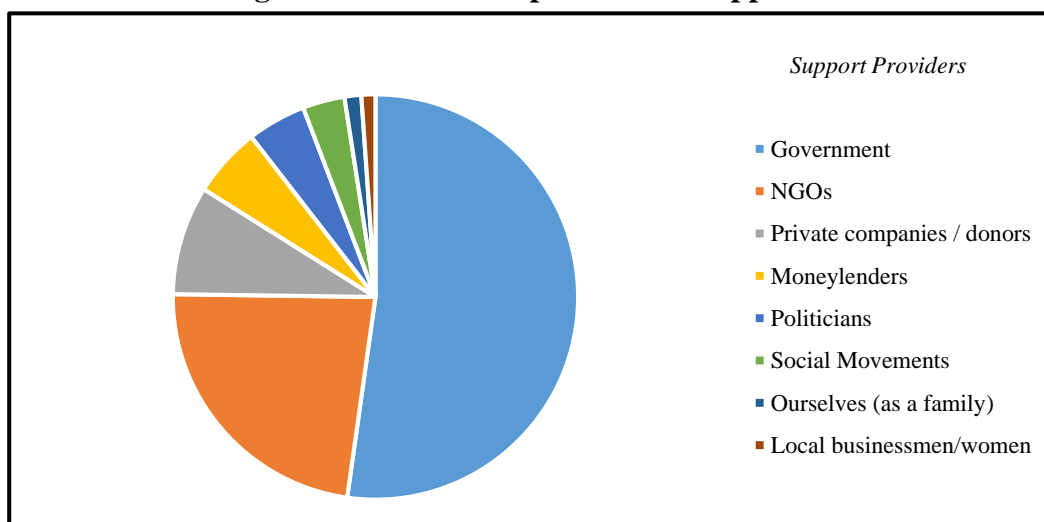
Figure 8. What kind of support would be most helpful to you in entering a different job or starting a business?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

We asked the 236 respondents who were interested to enter a different job or start a business about **who should provide the support** (highlighted in Figure 8). **Figure 9** summarises the responses. The ‘government’ (first and foremost) and ‘NGOs’ were regarded as the primary agencies to provide financial and non-financial support. However, a range of other providers were also identified, from ‘private companies’ to ‘moneylenders’ and ‘social movements’. As section 3.4.3 will demonstrate, there is a **significant gap between expectations of support for alternative livelihoods and rehabilitation, and the reality of receiving such support.**

Figure 9. Who should provide this support?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

We asked the same group **how much money they believed would be required to set up a business / enter self-employment**. **Table 7** summarises the lowest and highest estimates, as well as the average estimated capital (₹) respondents believed would be required. As indicated, the estimates vary widely within and between the different business types. The exact costs of establishing such businesses (taking into account local materials, labour, renting or owning equipment, land purchase or rental etc) require further investigation. The scale of the business the respondents were referring to is also unclear, for example, small-scale home-based tailoring to a small garments shop, or owning or renting out one or a fleet of three-wheeler taxis. However, the survey results do indicate that **participants see the costs being high**, posing significant financing challenges to those on low, irregular wages, with no savings or heavy debt. ‘*Driving three or four wheelers*’ was seen to be particularly costly, with respondents stating an average of ₹ 345000 to set up such an enterprise, with ‘*agriculture / growing vegetables*’ less costly at an average of ₹ 125000.

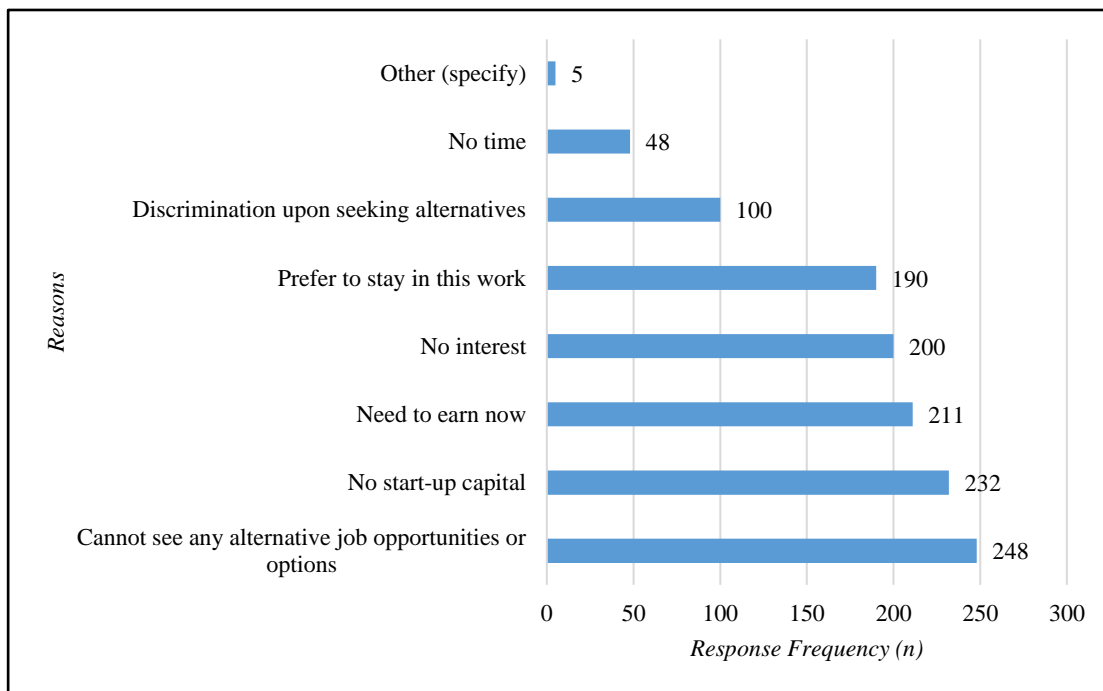
Table 7. How much money do you think you would need to start your business / enter into self-employment?

Business Type	Number of Respondents (n)	Lowest Estimate (INR)	Highest Estimate (INR)	Average	
				(INR)	(USD)
Garments / textiles / tailoring	57	40000	500000	270000	3630
Animal rearing (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)	27	50000	350000	200000	2690
Running a shop (tea stall, food)	25	50000	500000	275000	3690
Driving three or four-wheeler (taxi)	23	90000	600000	345000	4630
Agriculture / growing vegetables	13	50000	200000	125000	1680
Driving car (taxi)	8	65000	500000	282500	3790
Computing / IT / mobile / electrical repair	4	20000	300000	160000	2150

Whilst 236 respondents had a plan (or aspired) to enter a different job or start a business, the vast majority (n=628 or 72.7%) did not. The reasons given for this are outlined in **Figure 10**. The most commonly reported reasons were ‘*cannot see any alternative job opportunities or options*’ (n=248), ‘*no start-up capital*’ and the ‘*need to earn now*’, indicating the **daily financial insecurity** that many workers face. A large number of participants stated that they ‘*prefer to stay in this work*’ (n=190), while others mentioned that they face ‘*discrimination upon seeking alternatives*’, a commonly reported challenge for low-caste sanitation workers.

The ‘*other (specify)*’ responses reflected the themes above, including ‘*lack of cash*’, ‘*no other choice*’ and that ‘*they (employers) will not hire people of my caste for other work*’.

Figure 10. Reasons for not having any plan to enter a different job or start a business*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

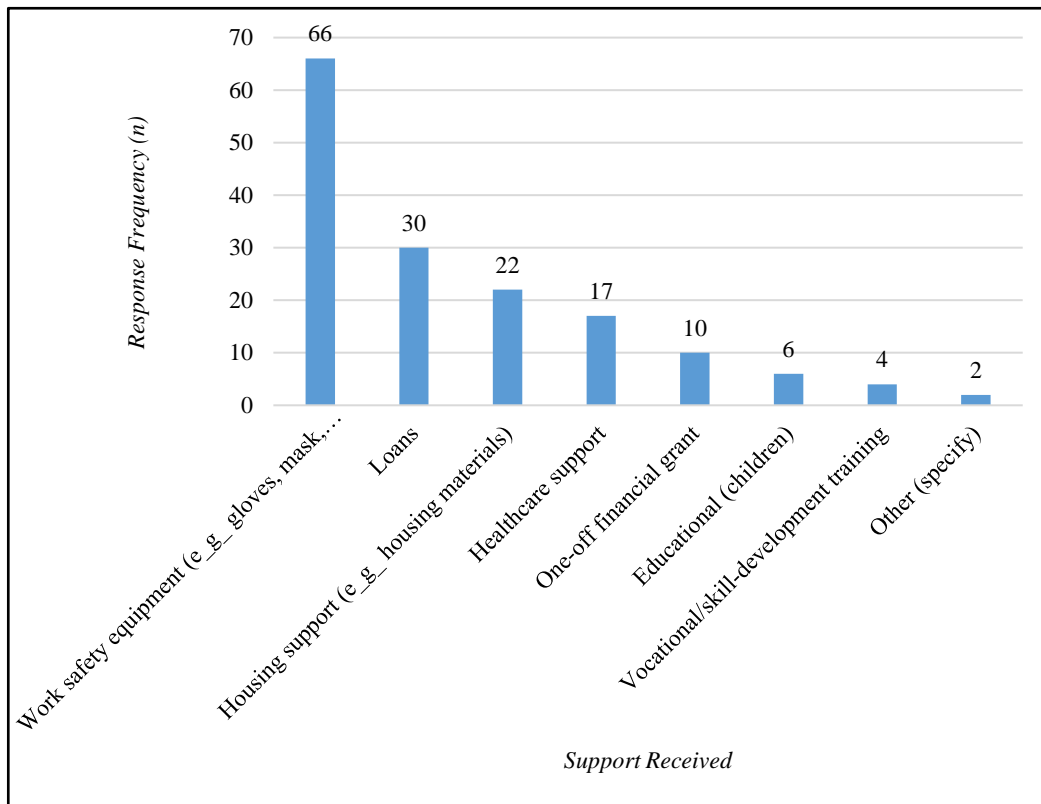
3.4.3. Manual Scavenger Identification and Rehabilitation

We asked all participants if, to their knowledge, they had been identified as a ‘manual scavenger’ (as per the 1993 and 2013 Acts) and offered support for rehabilitation. **Over half of respondents (n=522 or 60.4%) stated ‘yes’ they had been identified under this category**, with 211 (24.4%) stating ‘no’ and 131 (15.2%) declaring ‘not sure’. However, when we asked if respondents had received any support from the government to leave this occupation / for rehabilitation (regardless of manual scavenging status), **the vast majority (n=732 or 84.7%) stated ‘no’ they had not**. Out of those that stated ‘yes’ (n=132 or 15.3%), 71 had been identified as manual scavengers, 49 had not been identified as manual scavengers, and 12 were not sure. This means that, **of the 522 participants who self-reported being identified under this category, only 71 (13.6%) declared receiving any governmental support** for rehabilitation. Of this 522, 199 were female and 323 male, and of the 71 who received support, 49 were male and 22 female, demonstrating also a clear **gender disparity** in access.

Figure 11 summarises the support reportedly received from the government. The support most frequently mentioned (n=66) was ‘*work safety equipment*’, with only a handful of participants mentioning ‘*healthcare support*’ (n=17), a ‘*one-off financial grant*’ (n=10) or ‘*vocational/skill-development training*’ (n=4) – supposedly provided to those identified as manual scavengers. The ‘*other (specify)*’ (n=2) related to ‘*widows pensions*’. The ‘*one-off financial grant*’ received by the 10 respondents varied significantly from ₹ 20,000 to 200,000, with the most frequently reported amount being ₹ 50,000. Of the 4 respondents that received ‘*vocational/skill*

development training’, 2 received ‘garments/textiles/tailoring’ training, and 2 for ‘animal rearing (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)’.

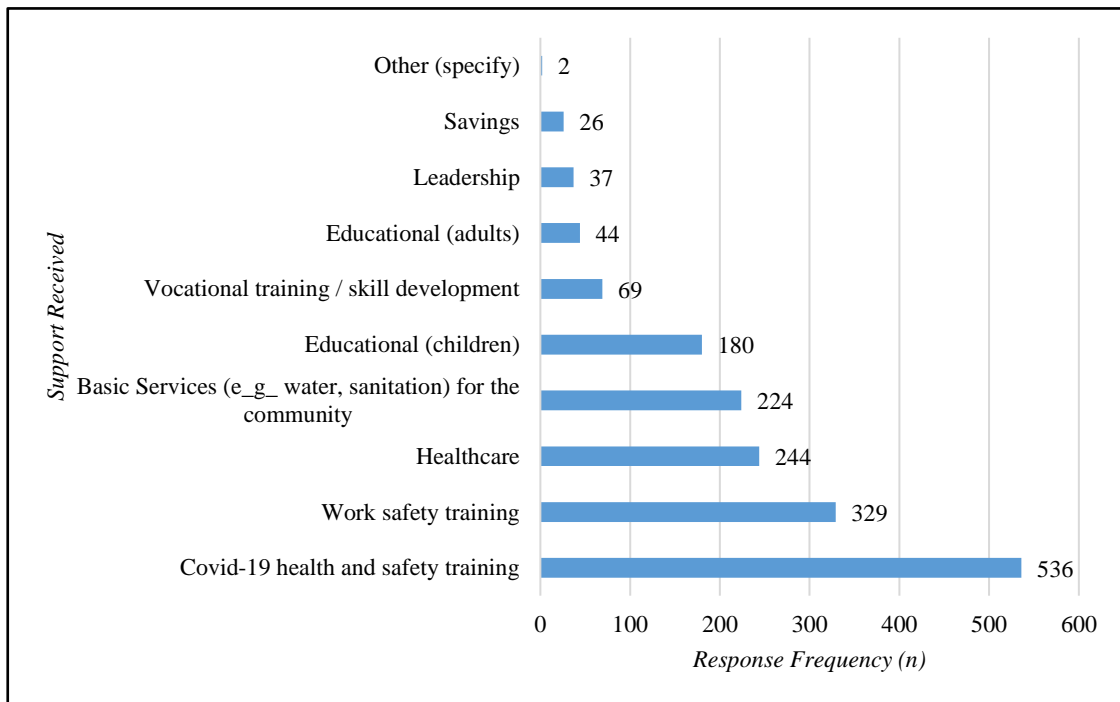
Figure 11. What type of support did you receive (government)?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

Recognising the important role that non-governmental agencies play in providing support to sanitation workers, we also asked respondents if they had ‘**received any other support or training from NGOs, activists or associations**’, in addition to, or instead of the government support mentioned above. **The majority of respondents (n=624 or 72.2%) stated that ‘yes’, they had received such support.** Figure 12 outlines the different types of support provided to those who answered ‘yes’. Reflecting the ongoing pandemic and heavy burden on sanitation workers, ‘*covid-19 health and safety training*’ was most frequently mentioned (n=536), followed by ‘*work safety training*’ (n=329). Non-governmental agencies also provided a range of support at community level, including; ‘*healthcare*’, provision of ‘*basic services*’, ‘*education*’ (children and adult), ‘*vocational training/skill development*’ (a priority highlighted in section 3.4.2), ‘*leadership*’ training and ‘*savings*’ schemes. The ‘*other (specify)*’ included ‘*medical aid*’ for children and ‘*relief kits*’.

Figure 12. What support did you receive? (NGOs, activists or associations)*

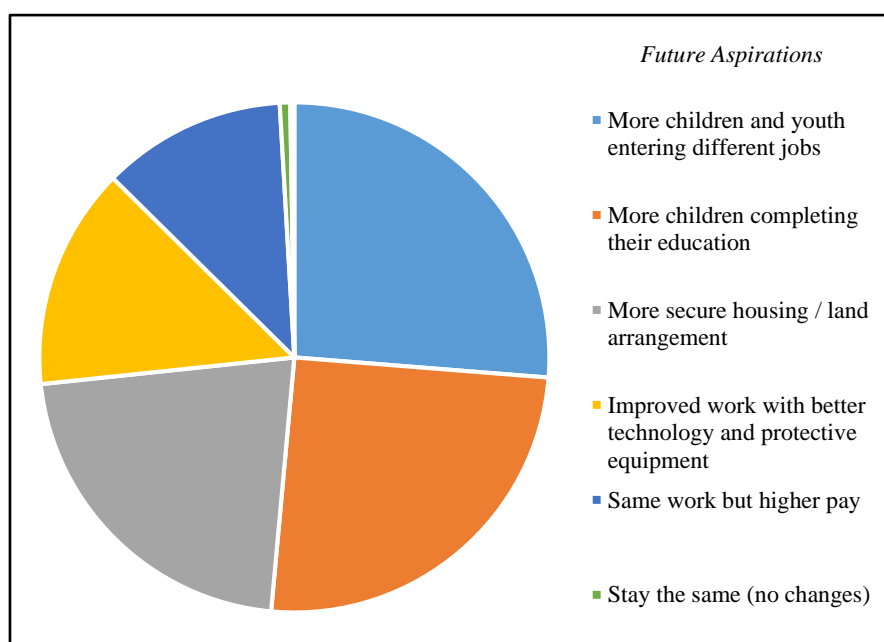


*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

The next set of questions asked participants to **reflect on the future of manual scavenging, their aspirations for their children and the community, and any actions they are taking themselves**, to improve or exit hazardous sanitation work. We first asked participants if they **believed manual scavenging would still exist in 5-10 years' time**. The majority (n=617 or 71.4%) stated 'yes', they believed that it would. We then asked if participants wanted their children to enter sanitation work, and specifically manual scavenging. Unsurprisingly, **an overwhelming majority (n=785 or 90.9%) stated 'no', they do not want their children to do this work**. **Figure 13** summarises the responses when we asked participants what they want to see for their children and community in 5-10 years' time.

As indicated, the most frequently mentioned aspiration was for **'more children and youth entering different jobs'** (n=515) and **'completing their education'** (n=494). However, others highlighted the need for **'more secure housing / land arrangements'** (n=429) (a key concern also highlighted among sanitation workers in Bangladesh), and a number of participants stated that they wanted **'improved work with better technology and protective equipment'** (n=276) and/or **'same work but higher pay'** (n=229). The **'other (specify)'** responses (n=5) included a **'debt-free life'** (debt being a significant challenge for many sanitation workers, many of whom rely on loans from moneylenders with very high interest rates), **'entering other government jobs'**, more work from the government to **'eliminate manual scavenging'** (mentioned twice) and **'equal respect, awareness and good education'** – highlighted on the opening of this report.

Figure 13. What do you want to see for your children and community in 5-10 years' time?*



*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

We asked participants if they are **taking any actions to bring about changes in their work and living arrangements**. Just under half (n=397 or 46%) of all respondents stated ‘yes’ they were, but just over half (n= 467 or 54%) stated ‘no’. The **reasons for not taking any action** included that ‘*there are no alternatives*’ (most frequently mentioned), ‘*worried about losing job*’, ‘*no point-nothing will change*’, ‘*no money to take action*’, ‘*it’s God’s will that we do this work*’, ‘*worried about putting my family at risk*’ and ‘*no time*’. These responses highlight the **fatalism and disillusionment that many sanitation workers face, as well as the fear of repercussions** (from employers, local power holders, higher caste groups) if they were to take action to improve their work and living arrangements. However, a large number of participants were taking action to address the challenges they face on a daily basis, listed in **Table 8**.

Table 8. What actions are you taking?*

Actions	Response Frequency (n)
Lobbying local officials / politicians	303
Lobbying employers	105
Setting up our own organisation	74
Public speaking (at events)	66
Contacting media	54
Joining protests	40
Other (specify)	3

*Multiple choice question, meaning respondents could select more than one answer.

Respondents commonly reported taking a range of different actions, for example, lobbying local officials / politicians, contacting the media, public speaking and joining protests. The ‘*other (specify)*’ referred to taking action to bring about change in ‘*family circumstances*’ and ‘*family progress*’ (the exact meaning of which is unclear). These findings are particularly important in challenging negative stereotyping and assumptions that **sanitation workers and their families are over reliant on government or NGO support**, when they are in fact taking a range of actions to improve their living and working conditions, or fear repercussions or no change, if they do.

4. LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Potential limitations of the study are outlined below.

Covid-19: Data collection began when covid-19 cases were still low in Tamil Nadu, and across the country. Safety measures were put in place by READ and Vizhuthugal, with budget set aside for sanitiser and masks. Only local staff from the communities or working closely with sanitation worker communities were deployed as enumerators to minimise travel. Enumerators remained outside and maintained social distancing when talking to participants. When cases in the working areas and across India began to rise (as part of the second wave in India), fieldwork was suspended with immediate effect.

Data Accuracy & Verification: The ongoing covid-19 pandemic meant that all communication and training sessions with local enumerators in Tamil Nadu were conducted online, via phone calls or WhatsApp. Whilst the teams also had on the ground support from Vizhuthugal and READ and training materials, virtual interaction hindered the quality and length of training on KoBo software, leading to some initial delays in downloading and piloting. Human error could also occur in completing and submitting the surveys to the server (for example, inputting incorrect data or typos). However, daily data checks by Dr Cawood and administrators in Vizhuthugal and READ, and an enumerator numbering system (to record submissions to the server) meant that any inconsistencies were identified and addressed quickly.

Generalisability: The survey was primarily conducted to support Vizhuthugal and READ in gathering data on education, working conditions and rehabilitation to support ongoing advocacy and programmes in Tamil Nadu. This is why data was collected in their working areas. The data presented here is not necessarily representative, therefore, of sanitation workers across India. Not all ‘sanitation workers’ are also captured in the survey, with it being particularly challenging to reach those working for long periods away from the home, or doing one-off informal emptying work. Sanitation workers remain a highly heterogeneous group, and local social, political, environmental and economic conditions can affect data outcomes. For example, garment factories being a significant employer in Tamil Nadu, may mean that respondents are more likely to identify the garment sector as a potential avenue for alternative jobs, outside of sanitation work. However, findings presented here do support and nuance findings from existing studies on sanitation workers (see reference list) in India and across South Asia, including Bangladesh, where project fieldwork was also conducted. The local and regional trends identified have important implications for future research, policy, advocacy and practice, to support sanitation workers and their families.

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6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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7. APPENDIX (Questionnaire¹⁰)

A. ENUMERATOR NUMBER:	
B. SETTLEMENT NAME/LOCATION:	
INFORMED CONSENT Has informed <u>consent</u> been given by the participant for the survey?	Yes (please proceed)
	No (do not proceed)
SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	
1.1. Gender	Male
	Female
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
1.2. How old are you	
1.3. What is your marital status	Single
	Married
	Separated
	Divorced
	Widowed
1.4. What level of education do you have	No formal education
	Primary School (I to IV)
	Middle Primary (VI to VII)
	High School (VIII to X)
	Pre University (XI to XII)
	Undergraduate
	Masters
	Vocational Training / Diploma
	Other
	Lack of money (needed to earn)

¹⁰ Questions and answer options identified based on previous and ongoing research with sanitation workers in India and Bangladesh. The questions were coded into excel, translated to Tamil and inputted into KoBo. The question order outlined here differs slightly in the report, as connections were identified during analysis.

<i>1.4.1. If 'no formal education' or 'primary school only', reasons for not completing or dropping out of education</i>	Lack of time
	Not interested
	Marriage
	Could not see future job opportunities
	The quality of the education/teaching was not good
	Discrimination from students
	Discrimination from teachers
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
1.5. Do you have children	Yes
	No
<i>1.5.1. If 'yes', are they in school</i>	Yes
	No
<i>1.5.1.1. If 'yes', have you received any educational support for your children</i>	Yes
	No
<i>1.5.1.1.1. If 'yes', what type of support</i>	Stipend (regular)
	Grant (one-off)
	Free uniforms
	Free books
	Free school meals
	Fee waiver or reduced fees
	Other
<i>1.5.1.1.2. If 'no', reasons for not receiving support</i>	No support was offered
	Do not know how to get it
	Tried but blocked
	Started getting support but then it stopped
	Corruption
	Do not need it
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
<i>1.5.1.2. If 'no', reasons why children are not in school</i>	Lack of money for educational expenses (eg travel, food, books, uniform)
	Children needed to work to support family
	Lack of time

	Not interested
	Could not see future job opportunities
	Discrimination from other students
	Discrimination from teachers
	They are not of school going age
	They have completed their education
	Other
<i>1.5.1.2.1. If 'they have completed their education', how easy or difficult was it for them to find a job in the subject they studied on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult)</i>	1 - very easy
	2 - easy
	3 - neutral / can't say
	4 - difficult
	5 - very difficult
<i>1.5.1.2.1.1. If 'very difficult' or 'difficult'. Why was this?</i>	No jobs advertised
	Caste discrimination
	Gender discrimination
	Living place / address discrimination
	Bribes needed to access jobs
	More education/ training needed (unaffordable)
	Too much job competition
	Other
SECTION 2: EMPLOYMENT DATA	
2.1. What type of 'sanitation work' do you do	Cleaning Toilets
	Emptying Pit Latrines
	Emptying Septic Tanks
	Sewer Cleaning / Unblocking
	Drain Cleaning / Unblocking
	Dry latrine cleaning
	All of the above
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.2. Why did you enter this work	Born into it / hereditary
	No other options
	Needed to earn

	Forced into it by family
	Not qualified for other work
	Wanted to do it
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.3. At what age did you enter this work	
2.4. What is the location of your work	Private houses
	Municipal / City Corporation offices
	Marketplace
	Private offices
	Factory (e.g. garments / textiles)
	Government hospital
	Private hospital
	All over the town/city
	Rural areas
	Other
2.5. Do you have a job title / designation?	Yes
	No
<i>2.5.1 If 'yes', what is your job title / designation</i>	
2.6. Who is your employer	Private homeowners
	Municipality / City Corporation
	Private company
	Contractor
	Subcontractor
	Informal
	Self-employed
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.7. How frequently do you work	Daily
	Fortnightly
	Monthly
	Not regular (as and when required)
2.8. Has the frequency and workload increased or decreased over the past 5 years	Increased
	Decreased

	Unchanged
	Not sure
2.8.1. If 'decreased', what are the reasons for this	New technology (replacing need for manual work)
	Manual scavenging is banned, no one is calling us
	Personal illness/ ill health (unable to work)
	Personal injury (unable to work)
	Other people entering this work (job competition)
	Not getting called up by the employer
	Conflict with the employer or fellow workers
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.8.1.1 If 'new technology' has reduced your work, what technology are you referring to	Mechanical Trucks / Tractors
	Hand pumps
	Sewer cleaning machines
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.8.1.2. If 'other people are entering this work', which other people are you referring to	Higher caste groups
	Lower caste groups
	Other religious groups
	Other ethnic groups
	Higher income groups
	Lower income groups
	Foreign workers
	(Indian) migrant workers
	People with higher educational qualifications
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.8.2. If 'increased', what are the reasons for this	My employer demands more shifts due to Covid-19
	My employer demands more shifts (reasons other than Covid-19)
	There is more demand from households/customers
	I need to earn more so have taken more shifts
	There are not enough workers so we have more work to do
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.9. Do you have a work contract or agreement	Yes

	No
2.9.1 If 'yes', is it a written or verbal agreement	Signed contract with employers
	Verbal agreement only
	Other (specify):
2.9.2. If 'yes', what type of contract or agreement is it	Permanent
	Fixed-Term
	Part-Time
	Daily labour / master roll (not regular)
	Other
2.9.2.1. If 'fixed-term' or 'part-time' contract, what is the duration (select one)	Months
	Years
2.10. What are your averages wages for this work (select one)	Per Job
	Per Day
	Per Month
	Per Year
2.11. Do you get any of the following work benefits	Pension
	Maternity or paternity cover
	Health insurance
	Health cover (one-off)
	Bonuses (e.g. religious festivals)
	Sick pay
	Annual leave
	Overtime
	No, none
2.12. Are you part of any workers organisation	Yes
	No
2.12.1. If 'yes', what type of organisation	Cooperative
	Informal association
	Union
	Self Help Group (SHG)
	Community Based Organisation (CBO)
	Other

2.13. Do you do any additional jobs to the sanitation work mentioned earlier	Yes
	No
<i>2.13.1 If 'yes', what job or jobs do you do</i>	Road sweeping
	Solid waste collection
	Domestic cleaning
	Driving truck (sludge or solid waste)
	Driving three or four-wheeler
	Garments / Textiles / Tailoring
	Run a shop (tea stall, food)
	Animal rearing (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)
	Agriculture / growing vegetables
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
2.14. Do you have any other additional sources of income, in addition to the jobs mentioned	Yes
	No
<i>2.14.1. If 'yes', what additional sources of income do you have</i>	Rent from tenants
	Interest from moneylending / loans
	Selling homebrew (alcohol)
	Tailoring
	Childcare
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
SECTION 3: ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS, SUPPORT AND REHABILITATION	
3.1. Have you been identified as a 'manual scavenger'	Yes
	No
	Not sure
3.2. Have you received any support from the government to leave this occupation for rehabilitation	Yes
	No
<i>3.2.1. If 'yes', what type of support did you receive</i>	One-off financial grant
	Loans
	Vocational/skill-development Training
	Educational (children)
	Educational (adult e.g. literacy)
	Housing support (e.g. housing materials)

	Work safety equipment (e.g. gloves, mask, boots)
	Healthcare support
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
<i>3.2.1.1. If 'one-off financial grant', what was the amount you received</i>	
<i>3.2.1.2. If 'vocational/skill development training', what was this for</i>	Computing / IT / Mobile / Electrical repair
	Garments / Textiles / Tailoring
	Driving truck (sludge or solid waste)
	Driving three or four wheeler
	Driving car (taxi)
	Animal rearing (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)
	Agriculture / growing vegetables
	Running a shop (teastall, food)
	Setting up a business
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
3.3. Do you have any plan to enter a different job or start a business	Yes
	No
<i>3.3.1. If 'yes', what type of job do you want to enter or business do you want to start</i>	Computing / IT / Mobile / Electrical Repair
	Garments / Textiles / Tailoring
	Driving truck (sludge or solid waste)
	Driving three or four-wheeler
	Driving car (taxi)
	Animal rearing (cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, chickens)
	Agriculture / growing vegetables
	Running a shop (teastall, food)
	Solid waste collection
	Road sweeping
	Teacher
	Police officer
	Office worker / administrator
	Health worker
	NGO worker
	Domestic cleaner

	Office cleaner
	Construction worker
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
<i>3.3.1.1. How much money do you think you would need to start your own business / self-employment</i>	
<i>3.3.1.2. What kind of support would be most helpful to you in entering a different job or starting a business</i>	Vocational / skill development training
	Mentoring
	Start-up capital (grant)
	Start-up capital (equipment)
	Joining a savings group / starting to save
	Accessing loans
	Forming a group (e.g. SHG, cooperative, association or union)
	Re-entering education
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
<i>3.3.1.2.1. Who should provide this support</i>	Ourselves (as a family)
	Ourselves (as a community)
	Government
	NGOs
	Social Movements
	Moneylenders
	Private companies / donors
	Local businessmen/women
	Politicians
Other	
<i>3.3.2. If 'no', what are the reasons for not having any plan to enter a different job or start any business</i>	Discrimination upon seeking alternatives
	Cannot see any alternative job opportunities/options
	No time
	Need to earn now
	No start-up capital
	No interest
	Prefer to stay in this work
	<i>Other (specify):</i>

3.4. Have you received any other support or training from NGOs, activists or associations	Yes
	No
<i>3.4.1. If 'yes', what support have you received</i>	Educational (children)
	Educational (adults)
	Healthcare
	Vocational training / Skill Development
	Savings
	Leadership
	Basic Services (e.g. water, sanitation) for the community
	Covid-19 health and safety training
	Work safety training
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
3.5. Do you think manual sanitation work will exist in 5-10 years' time	Yes
	No
3.6. Do you want your children to enter sanitation work (specifically manual scavenging)	Yes
	No
3.7. What do you want to see for your children and community in 5-10 years' time	More children completing their education
	More children and youth entering different jobs
	More secure housing / land arrangement
	Improved work with better technology and protective equipment
	Same work but higher pay
	Stay the same (no changes)
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
3.8. Are you taking any actions to bring about change in your work and living arrangement	Yes
	No
<i>3.8.1. If 'no', why not</i>	It's God's will that we do this work
	There are no alternatives
	No point - nothing will change
	No time
	No money to take action
	Worried about losing job

	Worried about putting family at risk
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
3.8.2. If 'yes', what actions are you taking	Joining protests
	Lobbying local officials / politicians
	Lobbying employers
	Setting up our own organisation
	Contacting media
	Public speaking (at events)
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
SECTION 4: HEALTH RISKS OF SANITATION WORKERS¹¹	
4. Do you think sanitation work is dangerous	Yes
	No
4.1. Have you ever been injured during work	Yes
	No
4.1.1. If 'yes', what kind of injury	Fell down and broke bones
	Bitten by dogs
	Had cuts / bruises on hands / feet
	Other
4.2. Do you know any workers who were injured during sanitation work	Yes
	No
4.2.1. If 'yes', what kind of injury	Fell down and broke bones
	Bitten by dogs
	Had cuts / bruises on hands / feet
	Other
4.3. Have you ever been sick because of the sanitation work	Yes
	No
4.3.1. If 'yes', what kind of sickness	Gas/ acidity
	Skin problems / allergies
	Eye problems
	Headaches
	Back pain / body pain

¹¹ Incorporated into 'employment data' in report

	Other
4.4. Do you know of any workers who fell sick because of sanitation work	Yes
	No
<i>4.4.1. If 'yes', what kind of sickness</i>	Gas/ acidity
	Skin problems / allergies
	Eye problems
	Headaches
	Back pain / body pain
	Other
4.5. Do you know anyone who died while doing sanitation work	Yes
	No
<i>4.5.1. If 'yes', how many such deaths of people that you know can you recall</i>	
SECTION 5: COMMUNITY IDENTITY & CASTE CERTIFICATE	
5.1. Which community do you belong to	Arunthathiyar
	Pallar
	Paraiyar
	Kuravar
	Kaattu Naiker
	Panniyandi
	<i>Other (specify):</i>
5.2. Do you have a caste certificate	Yes
	No
<i>5.2.1. If 'yes', how easy or difficult was it to get that certificate on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult)</i>	1 - very easy
	2 - easy
	3 - neutral / can't say
	4 - difficult
	5 - very difficult
<i>5.2.2. If 'yes', did you have to pay to get this certificate</i>	Yes
	No
<i>5.2.2.1. If 'yes', how much did you have to pay</i>	
Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions or recommendations for us?	

END OF REPORT