Issues and Challenges of Women Pourakarmikas in Mysuru City Corporation: A Study

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Abstract:
Today the empowerment of women has become one of the most important concerns of 21st century. But practically women empowerment is still an illusion of reality. We observe in our day to day life how women become victimized by various social evils. (R.M. Shettar, 2015) The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. Women Empowerment refers to the creation of an environment for own for their personal benefits as well as for the society.

In Karnataka the people employed and engaged in all forms of collecting waste, cleaning sewage pits and drains, sweeping roads and collecting and disposing human and animal excreta and animal corpses are called as Pourakarmikas. All municipal conservancy workers became to be referred as Pourakarmikas through a Government order in 1972.

The concept of women empowerment was the outcome of several important critiques and debates generated by the women’s movement throughout the world, and particularly in the developing countries. In essence, the 1980s saw the rise of stringent feminist critiques of development strategies and grassroots interventions: mainly for these strategies having generally failed to make any significant dent in the status of women.

This Paper attempt to analyze the Status of Women Pourakarmikas in Mysuru and highlights the Issues, Development and Challenges of women Empowerment. The study is pertain to the Mysuru City Mysuru district in the state of Karnataka, India. The significance of this study is to focus on the women Pourakarmikas who are exposed to the most virulent forms of viral and bacterial infections that affect their skin, eyes, and limbs, respiratory and gastrointestinal systems especially in the urban parts of Mysuru. Hence the study is based to rehabilitate the women Pourakarmikas and their Socio-economic study. The present study also signifies the present situation of the women Pourakarmikas as adequate economic alternative, it is often seen that women Pourakarmikas are not able to quit their degrading work.
Keywords: Empowerment, Health, Socio-economic, women Pourakarmikas, Rehabilitate, Victimized

Introduction:
India is a country of vast diversity with various religions and caste, and it has its own social culture for which every caste is also a segmental division of society, due to each caste and its social practices (G.S. Ghurye 1932). According to the census there are 6400 castes and sub castes which has hierarchical features and among them some have got a higher position and some have got lower status, which has been clearly depicted in the Rig-Veda in the smritis and purusha suktha also, In the karma siddantha also gives the various duties of these castes and the division of duties (G.S. Ghurye- 1948). Like wise their work restrictions in the society to perform their own duties which was called as the Varna’s, hence the shudras were considered has untouchables due to their duties performed and this untouchable were in the society are considered to be called has the Pourakarmikas in the contemporary times in the cities of India.

Historical Background of Pourakarmikas:
The word POURAKARMIKA originated in 1972 in conference in Delhi in the month of September by Sri Basavalingappapa the then Minister of Municipal Administration changed the name to pourakarmikas as they were called as sweepers or the pourakarmikas or by their caste names and it is on March 14th the day has been celebrated as the pourakarmikas day.
The word Pourakarmikas is a Kannada term which refers to ‘Poura’ means ‘Nagarika’ or ‘citizen’ and ‘Karmika’ means ‘Labourer’ which means the people who work with aiming of cleaning the city. The word scavenger is an equivalent English term for Pourakarmikas.
The Pourakarmika’s are considered employees of civic bodies; they do not get the facility which government employees get. Pourakarmika’s are deprived of Socio-Economic Conditions as well as health facility and other facilities.
Women Pourakarmikas render essential service to the community particularly in urban areas where the assumed a new dimension under the impact of slums. Majority of the Pourakarmikas (90% of the Pourakarmikas belongs to Sc) and some Pourakarmikas also involving a carry night soil or the most vulnerable to subjected to social and economic degradation. The social stigma of untouchability continuous to stig in one form or the other largely because of the unclean nature of their occupation. Since Pourakarmikas do not have any other means to earn their livelihood, they go about the job of keeping...
the city clean and there brings there diseases and other conditions of social life, also with the Privitization of garbage collection and its disposal, there ‘financial condition’ and health condition has worsened.

Empowerment:

Awareness, participation and mobility primarily constitute the information base and provide the necessary prerequisite for the process of empowerment to take place. While the three factors are interlinked it is generally assumed that awareness is inclusive of participation.

The Concepts of women’s empowerment originated from feminist movement during 1980s. The Government of India announced 2001 as the year of women’s empowerment and adopted ‘National Policy on Women’s Empowerment’. In spite of many initiatives of the Govt. gender disparity still persists. Women stayed back as beneficiaries of the Programmes.

Empowerment: Feminist Understanding

The meaning of empowerment can be seen to relate to the user’s understanding of power. In fact, the idea of empowerment is increasingly employed as a tool for understanding what is needed to transform the condition of poor (especially women) or underprivileged people (see Sen and Grown 1987).

Government Programmes for Women Empowerment:

The Government programmes for women development began as early as 1954 in India but the actual participation began only in 1974. At present, the Government of India has over 34 schemes for women operated by different department and ministries. Some of these areas follows:

1. Rastria Mahila Kosh (RMK) 1992-1993
5. Mahila Samakhya being implemented in about 9000 villages.
7. Swa Shakti Group.
11. Hostels for working women.
12. Swadhar.
14. Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (1975),
16. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers.
19. Short Stay Homes.
22. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
23. Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM).
24. Prime Minister’s Rojgar Yojana (PMRY).
25. Women’s Development Corporation Scheme (WDCS).
27. Indira Mahila Kendra.
28. Mahila Samiti Yojana.
30. Indira Priyadarahini Yojana.
31. SBI’s Sree Shaki Scheme.
32. SIDBI’s Mahila Udyam Nidhi Mahila Vikas Nidhi.
33. NGO’s Credit Schemes.
34. National Banks for Agriculture and Rural Development’s Schemes

**Constitutional Provisions for Empowering Women in India**

Equality before law for all persons

- **Article-14** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- **Article 15(1)** However, special provisions may be made by the state in favors of women and children.
- **Article 15(3)** Equality of opportunity for all citizens relating to employment or appointment to any office under the state.
- **Article 16** State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood.
- **Article 39(a)** (v) equal pay for equal work for both men and women.
- **Article 39(d)** Provisions to be made by the state for securing just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief
➢ Article 42 Promotion of harmony by every citizen of India and renouncement of such practices which are derogatory to the dignity of women.

➢ Article 51A(e) Reservation of not less than one-third of total seats for women in direct election to local bodies, viz; Panchayats and Municipalities

Study Area:-
Mysuru- the name evokes images of places tranquility, of rich culture and heritage. Mysuru is the second largest city in the state of Karnataka it was the former capital of kingdom of Mysuru. The city was earlier the capital of the wodeyar rules. It is located at 770m above the sea level the city is known for is palaces and proximity to several attraction the civic administrations for the cities managed by the Mysuru City-corporation, which was established as a municipality in 1888 and later converted in to a corporation in 1977. Onwards it was converted in to a Mysuru City Corporation (PP3:6:1992). The Corporation oversees the engineering works, health, sanitation, water supply, administration and taxation in the city.

In the Mysuru city out of 65 wards all wards door to door garbage collection is in progress. 60 wards or by federation of Mysuru City wards Parliament. 72 Auto tippers 396 push carts deployed for the waste collection. Chicken and Mutton market waste or collected separately in addition to these 168 numbers of 2 compartments, auto tippers, procured under JnNSURM to collect the dry and wet waste from households.

Pourakarmikas, who sweep the street clear garbage, remove Caracas of street dogs and cows all through the day. Wearing uniform and shoes given every year, the Pourakarmikas do not get any other facities to take care of their health. Pourakarmikas are considered employees of civic bodies but do not get the facilities provided to government employees, yet. In Karnataka there are about more than 8000 permanent Pourakarmikas working in town and city Municipal councils and City Corporation. About 5000 Pourakarmikas are also working on contract basis. In the wake of Privatization, the cleaning contract of 30 wards out of 65 wards 10 roads and 4 markets has to been given to private parties. The permanent employees of civic bodies get Rs 3500 to Rs 7000 per month while contract workers get a salary of Rs .1830/-

Objective:
1. Try to Understand the Status of women Pourakarmika’s in Mysore city Corporation.
2. To Know the Exploitation areas of women Pourakarmika’s. and to find out the Ineffective and inappropriate work aids.
3. What are the occupational health impacts and try to understand the legal provision of Pourakarmika’s.

Methodology:
At Present in Mysuru City Corporation 1719 Members are working (31st Dec-2011) and 521 dalits women also working in Mysuru City Corporation. For the purpose of case study we select only 50 respondents that are 10% of the total women workers in a random statistical method. Interview schedule introduce for the purpose of data collection and use statistical method to analyses the data.

Socio-Economic Conditions of Women Pourakarmikas:
Women Pourakarmikas constitute more than 50% of living in bad environment conditions even though women is unemployed and as laborers as casual laborers. The continue toil under the burning sun with as protection are benefits that laborer laws women’s are in the unorganized sector they do not even get minimum wages that the states had specify since they are unable to organized to demand for decent wages. Women workers even live in small houses and even the few who may have slightly better housing are divide basic amenities such as sanitation, light and safe clean drinking water (light and safe portable water). The women in brick clines for long hours has casual laborer to way roads without tar in burning sun.
30% of the respondents take decision in their families relating to financial matters house hold responsibility, decisions regarding important family matter in etc. in same time husband dominant and take all the decision and they control the finance of family but all the house holders drug Gerry and back breaking responsibility is and their families fall an there wife’s. Irrespective of their status majority of the respondents as per for higher education and almost all women disfavor of the dowry system they have felt that the dowry will continue even works like men.

Educational Status:
A large majority of the illiterate population comprised of women workers group and 80% to 90% of the respondent’s parents are totally illiterate. The girl drop out are illiterates because they have be less access to education which is an inherent part of caste system or their parental background they are not enough facility for education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Standard of Education</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Percentages of Women workers in MCC(below 6th std)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>PUC</td>
<td>PUC +</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Right to Education Act, followed by Parliament of India, included children in more can only after the intervention by the Prime-minister office following protest from social workers about the right to education. But in reality enrolment of children from weaker section is absolutely nil. In Mysuru City Corporation these children treated on for with other children in this school is also not in the Right manner and the above the table indicates that Right to Education bill is only in the black and white.

**Health Status:**
Mysuru City Corporation few women scavengers working in unprotected and in grew danger of contacting countless deceases though their daily and close contact with human waste. Some of these diseases in addition to T.B include: Campylovactes infection, giardiasis, hand, foot and mouth diseases, Hepatitis A, Rotavirus infection, Salamence weaknes, Shigella infection, thrush, viral gastroenteritis, worms and Yersiniosis.

### Health Problems among the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Diseases</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Allergic Problems</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Skin Problems</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Fever and other infection</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Other major diseases</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working Conditions:
Facing the dangerous of daily contract more than 70% of all women Scavengers have not been Provided Proper equipment to protect them from faces borne illness. The recent 2010 report on safety by India’s TISS (Tata Institute of Social Science) this includes safety equipment like glows, mask, booms and brooms. The use of hand by women workers along with the certainty that they will have direct skin contact with human waste is very dangerous condition that is contributing to serious health conditions. Chronic diseases and lung diseases are very common among women workers (MCC workers). The harassed of scavenging for which it has been worked on the bare hands, by picking up wastes which are harmful. Environments for which there is no safety for them. They are working without hand glows and no mask is given when they work at the same time they are facing so many problems including worst conditions of their family also; majority of the Pourakarmikas are illiterates and there social awareness is also very poor. The below charts stated that the poor social awareness of Pourakarmikas in Mysuru City Corporation.
Social awareness among to Pourakarmiakas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No</th>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Percentage of awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Right to Life</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Right to Vote</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>R.T.E</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Right to Work</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Right to Reservation</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Awareness about Social evils</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07</td>
<td>Awareness about their Association</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08</td>
<td>Equal before law</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09</td>
<td>Child labour</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Marriage, birth, death Registration</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of literature:

Mayanatu (1986) studied the health status of housemates performing a similar task of sweeping. This study indicates that disparity between the Permanent employees and Temporary employees.
Housing of sweeper was compared with 1991 census figures of Karnataka. Urban population 53.6% owned their houses 79.8% houses had cement floor. More than 56.5% sweepers studied lived in their own houses and 20.3% lived in Govt. accommodation. Comparing the figures of 1991 census for Karnataka coercion was used by 85% of sweeper’s family 29% general population. Similarly firewood was used by 1.34% of sweepers in relations to 43.4% among general population.

Chitra Nagaraj, Shiva.M.C, Jayanth Kumar.K and Narasimha Murthy.N.S-“A Study of morbidity and mortality profile of sweepers working under Bangalore city Corporation”

The study of 450 sweepers engaged in sweeping work. They had Socio-Economic stress in the form of large family size. Most of the sweepers studied belonged to Kuppaswamy Socio-Economic classes III. Mortality was formed to be high has compared to the General Population.

Findings:  
- Societal caste and class prejudices continue to marginalize them.  
- Pourakarmikas are generally over worked.  
- Pourakarmikas have to deal with harsh and difficult work conditions.  
- Pourakarmikas lack even storages state for their implements.  
- Harassment and exploitation severe increase of women.  
- Women lack maternity benefits.  
- Anemia common among Women Pourakarmikas.  
- High instance of skin Allergies.  
- Pourakarmikas are hard worker but there contribution if not valued.  
- Bangalore Development Authority-1976.

Conclusion:  
The study of 50 Women Pourakarmikas Reviled that most of them work engaged in Sweeping work. They had socio- economic stress in the form of large family size, high dependency rate and moderate per capita income. Housing conditions of women Pourakarmiaks was found to better condition is very poor most of them suffering from fever head ace, back ace, respiratory problem, diabetes etc. lack of education and regular health checkup has related in delayed diagnoses of many elements. Majority of the women Pourakarmikas had aware of social consequence; social awareness among the women Pourakarmikas is not up to the mark. The study of the outcome of treatment reviled high percentage of irregularity of they health. Oral; hygiene required special
mention in that more than 50% had carries and stained teeth with some of the women workers having fungal infections.

Reference:
3. The Centre organized a *Two Days Consultative Workshop on Unorganised Sector Workers Issues*, held at International Training Centre, NLSIU, Bangalore on 17th and 18th February, 2006.
4. The Center's Participation in the Training Programme for Conciliation Officers conducted by V.V Giri National Labour Institute, Delhi, held at International Training Centre, NLSIU, Bangalore on 20th and 25th February 2005
5. The Centre organised a *Two Days State Level Workshop on Awareness of Labour Legislations and Safety at the Workplace for Women Leaders*, held at International Training Centre, NLSIU, Bangalore on 25th and 26th February, 2005.
7. Pourakarmikas have tight deadlines primitive working conditions. 11th Nov 2012 (Times of India).
8. Raw deal for Pourakarmikas Aprl 3rd 2011 (Hindu).