

A Study on Occupational Health and Safety of Scavenger's in Dhaka City



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ACRONYMS

BDERM	:	Bangladesh Dalit Excluded Right Movement
DCC	:	Dhaka City Corporation
ILO	:	International Labour Organisation
OSH	:	Occupational Safety and Health
PPE	:	Personal Protective Equipment
SRS	:	Safety and Rights Society
NU	:	Nagorik Uddyog
WHO	:	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this study was to assess the health and safety conditions of Dalits as an effect of scavenging in the open dump sites without any personal protective equipment. The study also focused to explore Dalit scavenger's behavior, knowledge and attitude toward their traditional profession. Fifty scavengers (Traditional Sweeper) participated in this study. Data were collected from Gonoktuli Sweeper Colony at Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, using multiple techniques based on mix method research methodology. The study of Occupational Safety and Health on Dalit scavenger's revealed that the potential health effects of waste from open dump site-related exposure might include digestive tract disorders, respiratory disorders and allergic symptoms. As they were not provided any personal protective equipment, cut in hands and legs were very common that caused them long term infection. In-depth interview suggested that to reduce health hazards of dump site scavenger should be trained by Occupational Health and Safety (OSH). Most of scavengers were suffering from various infectious diseases although there were no official statistics; proper investigation and research is therefore key demand for scavenger's occupational health and Safety net. The study came out with observation that no treatment facilities are available for the sweepers at Dhaka city corporation hospitals. Thus a healthcare centre is an essential for every sweeper colony (both Dalit and Muslim).

Keywords: Scavenger, Mix Method, Health, Hazard, Risk, Dalit

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For 3,000 years Dalit's have lived in a cycle of discrimination and despair with no hope of escape.¹

Dhaka City Corporation is formally responsible for urban waste management. Usually scavengers do this work in inhuman and hazardous conditions. Their dignity, health and mortality are in inhumanly compromised because of their conditions of work. Generally low caste Hindu community named Dalit were brought in Bangladesh for scavenging the city. From 1864 to till today they are performing their hereditary profession with tooth and nails. The DCC employ about 7,156 scavengers for cleaning the city. Scavengers are performing their hereditary profession by scavenging, removing night-soil and cleaning of latrines, removal of filth, dead cattle, sweeping of houses and roads¹ and clearing clogged sewerage lines. The whole operating system of scavenging, however, does not operate in an environmentally friendly manner. They became ill due to un-protective way of scavenging. As because of poor living conditions and nature of their work, they face tremendous health and safety risks. The shanties in their colonies are not hygienic as a result their children have been suffering from different type of diseases. On the other hand the scavengers are working and spending most of their working hours at the dump site, little attention and resources are allocated for their occupational health and safety. It is pity that no single attempt was made for these Dalit's occupational safety and health who were devoting their days and nights for the city dwellers.

They are paid roughly 5000-8500 BDT² a month. Day by day it is becoming tough for the scavengers to survive with this little amount of money. Respondent says that their major portion of earning is being spent for their occupational diseases treatment purpose.

There are some NGOs such as Muktijodhya Kalyan Trust, Centre for Development Services (CDS), Bangladesh Institute of Labor Studies (BILS),etc are working focusing health and safety matter. Unfortunately, none of their activities are arranged for scavenger's (Dalits) occupational health and safety. Conversely there are many institutes and non government

¹ <http://www.behind-the-open-door.com>

² Source: field research 2013

organizations take lot of initiative to improve Dalit's socio-economic condition but nobody raises their voice for safe work condition for scavengers.

Nagorik Uddyog (NU) is a human rights organization working with Dalit and socially excluded communities to support their human rights struggle. In contrast Safety and Rights Society (SRS) is aiming to help improve workplace conditions and promoting workers safety in Bangladesh. From that point of views both the organizations pay their attention to explore the ways to improve scavengers safe work environment.

1.1 Justification and Objectives

The aim of the study was to identify the health and safety status of the scavengers of Dalit's community in Dhaka through mix method research that seek to develop new insights about how the city corporation handled these marginal people's occupational health and safety issues, and how effective their policies were.

The study addressed the following objectives:

- a) to explore occupational health and safety status of Dalit's
- b) to identify the types of occupational injuries and diseases of Dalit's associated with the process of scavenging ;
- c) try to way out the health and safety of scavenger's at workplaces;

1.2. Study Population & area

Some fifty Dalit scavengers (men and women) were selected from Gonoktuli Area of Hazaribagh, behind the Bangladesh Border Guard (B.B.G). head quarter and Southern part of the Rayer B³azar tannery of Dhaka. There is a sweeper community known as the Gonoktuli Municipal (sweeper) Colony. More than one lakh (one hundred thousand) sweepers live in the Ganoktuli Sweeper Colony ⁴.

Unhealthy environment is a great problem for that area, which causes their ill health and sanitation problems in the sweeper colony. The condition of entire colony is horrible, insanitary and distressful environment. The inhabitants of the colony, live in their small

³ <http://www.dalits.nl/060424.html>

shanties, have been passing their days in inhuman condition along with serious bad odor of dirt and garbage. Pure drinking water is unavailable all over the colony because of dirty water supply. There are only four to five water taps in the colony. There is no separate arrangement for the females bathing. No treatment facility was arranged in the colony by the government or non government organisation. There is only a primary school but the scope of education of the sweepers' children is limited. Due to illiteracy, lack of education and congestion, early marriage has become dominant in the sweeper community. There is no teacher who has some expertise on their language. Members of the Dalit community alleged that their children are neglected and harassed in the school. Therefore, they lose their interest to go to school.

However the colony was prepared for the sweepers⁴ but the Muslim sweepers gave entrance to the local influential's, who had already captured their colony land unlawfully and uses their colony for trading heroin, liquor and ganja. The dustbin is located in front of the slum house due to scarcity of space. They wash their dishes and other kitchen instruments with drain water. Mosquitoes and flies gather on the dirt. There is no scope to fresh breath because of huge congested slum houses in the colony. It is so tough for them to survive as a human being in that colony.

1.3. Limitation of the Study

Although this study was carefully prepared, we faced some limitations and shortcomings. First of all, the research was conducted in the one sweeper colony within Eight weeks. Eight weeks was not enough for the researcher to scrutinize all the occupational health and safety problems. It would be better if it was done in a longer time.

Second, the population of the study was small, only fifty scavengers which might not represent the majority of the scavengers'.

Third, since the questionnaire was designed to assess the scavengers' attitude towards their profession might gave useful information about the impacts of un-protective way of scavenging; it seemed that it did not provide enough evidence of the scavengers' actual hazards and risk to their profession.

⁴ both Dalit and Muslim

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF MANUAL SCAVENGING, HEALTH AND OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

2.1. World Scenario on Occupational Health and Safety

Worldwide, occupational diseases continue to be the leading cause of work-related deaths. According to ILO estimates, out of 2.34 million occupational fatalities every year, only 321,000 are due to accidents.

The remaining 2.02 million deaths are caused by various types of work-related diseases, which correspond to a daily average of more than 5,500 deaths. This is an unacceptable Decent Work deficit.

The inadequate prevention of occupational diseases has profound negative effects not only on workers and their families but also on society at large due to the tremendous costs that it generates, particularly, in terms of loss of productivity and burdening of social security systems.

From 2003, the ILO began to observe World Day in order to stress the prevention of accidents and diseases at work. To derive away the sufferings of worker the ILO celebrates the World Day for Safety and Health at Work on the 28 April to promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally. It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on emerging trends in the field of occupational safety and health and on the magnitude of work-related injuries, diseases and fatalities worldwide.⁵

2.2. The situation of scavengers in global context

Manual scavengers are people who manually remove or dispose human excreta. Although the practice was eradicated in Europe and the west with the invention of flush toilets, India continues this practice for its dry (non flush) latrines. Dry latrines are walled enclosures with open ceilings and empty floors made of concrete or stone where people can defecate. From the advent of the caste system, the disposal of waste and human excreta was relegated to the lowest layer of society. These people came to be treated as polluted or untouchable due

⁵ http://www.ilo.org/safework/events/meetings/WCMS_204594/lang--en/index.htm

primarily to the nature of the activities they performed. They were forced to live outside the limits of upper caste dwellings and were not allowed to enter the same temples or drink water from the same wells as upper caste individuals. This ex-communication and marginalization effectively meant that a person born in this community was demoted for life to carry out the same degrading tasks which were performed by his earlier generation. Members of the community had no resources to seek any alternative employment.

The practice of manual scavenging was legitimized during British rule, with the operation of dry latrines in military establishments and railway stations. To avoid the shame associated with the practice, the British called the manual scavengers “night soil workers”; a change of name did nothing to change the marginalization and abuse faced by this community.

In much of Asia and parts of Africa, caste is the basis of discrimination against and exclusion of distinct groups. Over 250 million people worldwide (160 million in India) suffer from this form of discrimination. Communities affected by caste include the Dalits in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, as well as the Buraku people of Japan, the Osu of Nigeria’s Igbo people, and certain groups in Senegal and Mauritania⁶

2.3. Occupational Health and Safety in Bangladesh

The occupational health and safety service in Bangladesh is still in the developmental stage. Here the occupational health & safety generally refers mainly to needs of workers of industries or some manufacturing processes but does not completely cover all recognized occupations of the country. The labour laws in Bangladesh have been framed which requires employers to undertake corrective measures on occupational safety and health. Lack of awareness, training, non-compliances of the OSH standards by the employers could not achieve the goal of providing safety and health to the workers as intended by the laws. There are a number of other laws and regulations that are also have some provisions related to occupational health and safety. These laws have provisions on occupational hygiene, occupational diseases, industrial accidents, protection of women and young persons in dangerous occupations and also cover conditions of work, working hours, welfare facilities, holidays, leave etc. But most of the laws are lacking in standard values and not specific rather general in nature.⁷ Work-related accidents and diseases continue to be a serious problem in Bangladesh. It is estimated that 11,700 workers suffer fatal accidents and a

⁶ http://www.indiawaterportal.org/sites/indiawaterportal.org/files/garbage_collecting_and_sweeping_scavenging_act_and_municipal_waste_water_workers_in_india_-_policy_and_practice.pdf

⁷ http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/ed_protect/protrav/safework/documents/policy/wcms_187745.pdf.

further 24,500 die from work related diseases across all sectors each year in Bangladesh. In response, the ILO/Japan project on Promoting National Occupational Safety and Health Policy Framework in Bangladesh started with aims to contribute to improve safety and health, and working conditions at the workplace. Other initiatives include improving occupational safety and health standards and ensuring compliance to core labour standards in the ready-made garment (RMG) and ship-recycling sectors. No Occupational Health and Safety training manuals for scavengers is available in Bangladesh.

2.4. Agonies of Dalit scavenger's in Bangladesh

The Dalits are not a homogeneous group in the same way a caste is, but they are more of a class, gathering several different castes. It is for instance undoubted that the so called Sweepers or *Horijons* of Bangladesh comes from India. It is said that they were brought to Bangladesh during late Mogul's times, from the beginning of the 17th century. It is then reported that a large migration of Dalit Sweepers took place when Dhaka became a municipality in 1864⁸. Another source claimed that a large migration of Dalits from India to different cities of Bangladesh happened around 1620's. A massacre took place in Dhaka by the Burmese pirates, to remove the dead bodies from the city, Dalits were brought in here from different parts of India⁹. Now they live in 27 colonies in Dhaka and its neighboring town Narayanganj.

It is required to be said that the word 'Dalit' in Bangladesh is of recent adoption, and thus not yet well known. Before that, the Bengali term Antaj was used. Even that term, however, did not get widespread adoption like the Muci/Rishi/Chamar and the Sweepers/Harijan. The latter name is used by the Sweepers as the proper name for their own caste. That is, the term harijan is not used in the way Gandiji used it. In the last years, the Dalit question has been receiving a degree of attention by both media and civil society¹⁰. It is predicted that there are about 5.5 million Dalits in Bangladesh. To this day this group of Dalits speaks the Telegu language among themselves and doing their hereditary job boringly. At present around 32,000 Jatt sweepers live in Dhaka city. Among them, around 3,000 are employed by the Dhaka City Corporation for its cleaning and waste collection activities. The rest are employed by government and non-government agencies. DCC set up colonies for Dalits at Ganaktuli, Dayaganj, Dhalpur, Sutrapur, Agargaon and Gabtoli embankment. Around 5,000

⁸ . (<http://dalitbangladesh.wordpress.com/dalit-2>)

⁹ . Banglapaedia, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka

¹⁰ file:///C:/Users/user/Desktop/Formal%20Sweepers%20in%20Bangladesh/THE%20SITUATION%20OF%20DALITS%20IN%20BANGLADESH%20_%20Dalit%20-%20Paritran.htm).

more live in 13 smaller settlements in Naryanganj and Savar (Bangladesh Dalit Human Rights (BDHR).

As because cleaning workers, they were allocated with some land to live separately in the cities .With the increase of their number that allocation of land and housing did not increase proportionately. Moreover, they do not have land rights, so generally they are landless people. Generations after generations Dalits are deprived from their very basic right to land and housing.

Actually Dalits were trapped by their cast system that denies them adequate education, safe drinking water, decent-paying jobs, and the right to own land or a home. The Sweeper Colony is evidence that Bangladesh's independence did not affect much change in this regard. Some of the inhabitants are employed by the same Public Works Department that established the colony but never supplied it with safe water and electricity.

They live in overcrowded conditions in their 'colonies' in slum like conditions with often three generations of 8-12 people living in one small room. They were expected to perform only society's most unpleasant tasks e.g. cleaning drains and sweeping roads! In this way they were passing an inhuman and sub-standard life amid unbearable pains, enormous sufferings, serious accommodation problem and deep uncertainty. Furthermore, they are economically marginalized and always belong to the most socially excluded groups in Bangladesh. They are almost entirely excluded from development policies and programmes and often cannot access justice and support services to which they are entitled. Over and above they were abandoned in areas of health, education, housing, employment and wages, application of legal rights, political participation and rural development. Consequently, Dalits were commonly segregated and banned from full participation in Hindu social life and as well as Muslim community. For instance, they could not enter a temple or a school, and were required to stay outside the village. Discrimination against Dalits still exists in rural areas in the private sphere, in everyday matters.

Sequentially, they do not have equal access to health care and live under horrible conditions. The majority of Dalits live below the poverty line, lagging behind in all development indicators. ¹¹

Dalits experience that the government has no programmes for eradication of poverty and discrimination among them. Neither do donors of development usually include Dalits in their

¹¹ (BDERM, BDEWF, Nagorik Uddyog 2012).

formulation of politics and programmes¹². Even though there are regulations in government recruitment that jaat (traditional) sweepers should be given priority, DCC or any other organizations mentioned to their advertisements for appointing cleaners that jaat sweepers will be given priority. But in reality many from the mainstream people are being recruited ignoring the jaat sweepers'. At 2006 to 2007 DCC recruited around 1,000 cleaners. But only 300 of them were from the Dalit community. Once it was a regulation that whenever a worker from the community dies or retires his or her family members are automatically employed to the post. This trend is gradually eliminating the sweepers from their job. With the increase of population and competition, thousands of able candidates from the community are sitting idle. Dalits are bound to this horrible and indecent occupation of garbage collecting and sweeping. Then again, it is very difficult for these people to change profession or get regular jobs even if they are educated and qualified (Das *et al* ,2008).

However Daize (2012) echoed the same opinion. She stated that, social exclusion and economic discrimination are common in untouchables of Bangladesh. Dalit as an untouchable community, they are excluded from different opportunities or development, freedom of mobility, resource, and membership in the society. They play an important role for the functioning of the society but they are widely regarded as menial. Highly resistant of religious and social structure and low education rate among them are the important barriers to bring any change or social mobility in their profession. Government and non-government sector should take more initiative that ensures Dalit access to same rights and services enjoyed by mainstream society. Some repaid and effective measure is necessary to identify this discrimination and human right issues and implement affirmative action programs to ensure equal access and opportunities to them.

BDERM & NU(2008) an NGO working with Dalit communities, recommend that GoB should undertake a comprehensive study on the human rights situation of Dalits Quota systems and special measures: Quota systems for Dalits should be established and implemented in all public educational institutes, and adequate employment opportunities should be reserved for Dalits in all sectors.

Masud (2006) yelled that there is no authority to look after the sweeper who passes their nights only to wake up in the morning to clean dirties and city garbage. They have been working for 365 days of the year but their reserved colonies are being occupied one after another by musclemen. They have been deprived of all types of civil facilities including

¹² (http://idsn.org/fileadmin/user_folder/pdf/Old_files/asia/pdf/FACTSHEET_BANGLADESH.pdf)

education and health care services. They have been passing their days in unbearable sorrows and sufferings without electricity, pure drinking water and supply of gas.

Parveen (2008), echoed the same word that the professional sweepers are facing hard times as mainstream people are gradually replacing them in their only profession that is cleaning the city. "The job of cleaning the city wastes is now a matter of competition. Today Dalits are being replaced by the mainstream population. With the increase of population and competition, thousands of able candidates from the community are sitting idle. On the other hand, it is very difficult for these people to change profession or get regular jobs even if they are educated and qualified.

There were many researches done in Bangladesh on the context of Municipal worker and the sufferings of Dalits in Bangladesh. But not a single research was made for their (Dalits) occupational safety and health issues. It is needed more exploration of the improvement of Scavenger's (Dalits) occupational safety and Health.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methods: The research was based on mixed method to explore the occupational health and safety conditions of the scavengers (Dalit's) in Dhaka city. The reason for selecting mix method was that it is very effective for collecting, analyzing and “mixing” both quantitative and qualitative data. Researcher used this method to achieve triangulation (confirmation of the same information by different methods or sources) to increase the validity of the results.

3.2 Sample size and sampling technique: Some fifty Dalit scavengers (men and women) were selected from Gonoktuli Area of Hazaribagh, behind the Bangladesh Border Guard (B.B.G). Head Quarter and Southern part of the Rayer Bazar tannery of Dhaka.

Researcher used snow ball sampling techniques for selecting study population. Snowball Sampling is simplest formulation. It consists of identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents. Though it is violet the principal of sampling, the use of snowball strategies provides a means of accessing vulnerable and more impenetrable social groups. Interviews were conducted in the respondents home and corridors, at their leisure time, during the day in good or bad weather.

3.3 Data collection techniques: Data gathering methods included key informant interviews, direct observations and in-depth interview. Even if, the in-depth interviews are time-consuming for both the researcher and the respondents but it brings the actual scenario.

The information was obtained via in-depth interviews and the respondents (scavengers) were asked about their occupational information, socioeconomic conditions, work shifts, health status, general health impairments (accidents, injuries, complaints, and diseases), and knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding self-protective measures. Researchers record as much behavior as possible, including actions, conversations, and descriptions of the locales. In the mean time researchers made a good rapport with the Dalit's populations. Consequently they selected the key informant¹³ and started interviewing for vast information. They got the first hand information from the respondents.

¹³ Moni Das has a great expectancy in Gonoktuli colony because she is the member of that society and the leading voice for Dalit's rights. Researchers selected her as the key informant of her research.

3.4. Data collection Tools: To interpret some remarkable facts researchers followed a systematic interview schedule and check lists (Collect both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time).

3.5. Data collection Procedure: Data collection, a self-introductory session, was arranged by the researcher to assess the *hidden* and *hard* of Dalit's traditional profession. Researcher explains the purpose of data collection to the respondents so that the respondents might understand the aims and objectives of the study and the meaning of the questions that they could respond accordingly. Researcher directly visited the respondent's location and recorded her observations of the scavenger's behavior.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

After the eight weeks of field work, it was revealed that scavenger's work begins in the early morning and continues until finish the work. They carried out their job without any form of protective equipment. Generally they collect and sweep four kinds of wastes like domestic waste, commercial waste, industrial waste, and hospital Waste. There are different ways and forms in which they are carrying out collecting and sweeping of garbage. They manually collect garbage into buckets or baskets using brooms and carried away to an area where the waste is discarded. The way of waste collection and dump with no gloves, boots and mask pose a serious threat to the health of the municipal workers. The abundance of fleas and offensive odors in waste disposal sites, along with the lack of proper protective devices, make working conditions even more unhygienic.

Research findings indicated that they worked in poor sanitary conditions to collect plastics, paper, glass bottles, rubber materials from dump sites, which was risky as they were exposed to various infectious agents and toxic substances that may cause illness. Due to that, they usually had cuts, injuries, irritation of eyes and suffered from skin rash and related health problems. Most of the respondents said that they often got injured from sharp objects, got rash when they collected and processed garbage. While working on busy road area, there is always panic of accidents from moving vehicles. Though there is no official data of sweeper's death by road accident but respondents whispered with morns that there were many sweepers death by road accidents and even police never took any initiatives for supporting them.

The research findings on knowledge, attitudes, and practices about occupational health and safety among scavengers revealed that 100 % of the respondent had no health information from the municipality or any other organizations. While working in municipality dump sites Scavengers are exposed to various health risks (infections, injury, and disability). They have no idea about the preventive vaccine before garbage collection.

Among the fifty respondent 100% mentioned that the only motivation behind doing this job is it is their family business. Regarding job satisfaction, 100% of the respondents were dissatisfied. They usually face high health risk with this type of labour and they are losing their interest in doing their traditional profession.

When it was asked to the respondents that the Availability of safety measures for scavenging by the GO and NGO, few of the respondents admitted that once DCC requested

Japan Government to make a master plan for waste management in Dhaka city. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) took the responsibility, and once they gave them mask, hand gloves, boots and apron and rest of the respondent confirmed that they even did not see those things during their working life. The major segment of the respondents considered that the women scavengers had to continue their work when they were pregnant, as a result of which their unborn children were also exposed to various environmental hazards. They believe that if they were given protective equipment for work then it will no more harmful to the health and their unborn children.



Photo: In absence of proper knowledge on OSH they put off their shoes while they were collecting waste. They were not given any protective equipment by the authority and there was no monitoring about safety by Dhaka City Corporation.

It was also asked, where they could get health service while they suffered from illness or injured, all respondents stated that they were extremely neglected by the city corporation's hospital. A considerable amount of the scavengers had experience to visit the medicine shop and purchase medicine without any recognized doctor's prescription. If they were not cured by the treatment of quack then they visited the local doctor or the private clinic. More than two third of the respondents express with grief that major portion of their earning was gone astray due to occupational injury and illness.



Photo: This lady screamed with sorrows that who will responsible for her leg infection?

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents:

There were considerable differences between male and female scavengers because the male scavenger's gave a huge bribe to the government broker which was not possible for the females. However, presently they become insecure for their hereditary profession as because of Muslim sweepers snatched their job from them.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents:

S.N.	Sex	Respondents	Percent
1	Male	34	68 %
2	Female	16	32%

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Table 2: Age of the Respondent: The study revealed that the age of the scavengers ranged from 14–60 years old, the mean age was 53. Among the respondents, only 20 percent scavengers were under 30 years of old. It is alarming that gradually the number of young aged scavenger is decreasing. Muslim scavengers are snatching the traditional profession of the Dalit scavengers.

Table 2: Age of the Respondent:

Age	Respondents	Percent %
14-30	10	20%
31-45	14	28%
46-60	18	36%

60>	08	16%
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Table 3: Education of the Respondents:

The study results revealed that the education level was mostly illiteracy 70% in the respondents. The results revealed all the mean scores for knowledge, attitudes, and practices among scavengers. Most had low levels of knowledge in terms of alertness, negative and neutral attitudes about health risk behaviors affecting their health, and inappropriate practices regarding the prevention of infection, injury, and disability. Most of them were the main source of income for taking care of all family members. Nearly everyone had insufficient income compared to expenditure. Some eat food found at the dump site and some bring their children to work with them. Most scavengers were in debt and seemed as deprive of the deprived, live on the margins of mainstream society.

Table 3: Education of the Respondents:

SL	Education	Respondents	Percent %
1	Literacy	05	10%
2	Illiteracy	35	70%
3	Primary	03	06%
4	Lower Secondary	07	14%

Source: Field Survey, 2013



Photo: Ladies anticipated that their child and grand child will be a human being (They thought that they were less than a human being) never be a scavenger!



Photo: Human excreta were floating on the water tank. The scavengers who scavenging every day in the week, month and year they were rewarded by excreta mixing water for bathing.



Photo: Scavengers have been working for more than 10 hours or more a day. Quite early in the morning when city dwellers do not start their work, scavengers have to start cleaning the city for ensuring cleanliness for the fortunate dwellers. Women scavengers are more Dalit among the Dalits!

Table 4: Monthly incomes of The Respondent: The average income of scavengers was 4170 (Field Survey, 2013) BDT per month. With this little amount of earning they had to pay utility charge, mobile phone bills, buy medicine and food for more than four members of the family. Every month they had to borrow money from others with high interest rate. Scavengers cut down their prime needs and developed coping mechanism in order to

survive. They always buy the second hand products and minimize their children's proper nutrition and education.

Table 4: Monthly incomes of The Respondent:

Monthly incomes of The Respondent	Number of The Respondent	%
<5000	11	22%
5000-7500	20	40%
7600-10,000	13	26%
10.000>	06	12%
Total	50	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2013



Photo: Women could not wash their cloths besides the nasty drain so they washed their cloths in their bed room. Though they were bound to maintain city's cleanliness but government didn't allocate a singel space for female scavenger's! They were unhappy by doing their hereditary profession.



Photo: Scavengers collect garbage without any protective equipments like mask, gloves, boots and apron. The suffering caused by such un-protective work, accidents and illnesses to workers and their families is incalculable.

Table 05 : Health Problem last year

Any Health Problem last year		
Health problem	Number of respondent	%
LowBackPain	21	42%
Headache	18	36%
Itchiness/ Rash	10	20%
Stomach ache	17	34%
Irritation of eyes	3	06%
Gastric	15	30%
Jaundice	7	14%
Asthma	6	12%
Fever	35	70%
Cold and Cough	47	94%
Scavengers had more than one incidence of illness.		

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Occupation related health problems among the workers last year. Scavengers were asked to remember illnesses they have experienced during the last year. Scavengers undertaking routine work on seven days in a week at dump sites most suffered with low back pain (42%), cold and cough (94%), and skin rashes (20%). Other problems included headaches (36%), Stomach ache (34%), Fever (70%), Asthma (12%), Irritation of eyes (6%) Gastric (30%)

Jaundice (14%). Fever, cough, and low back pain were the most reported. Most respondent had frequently suffered such weakness and never had an annual medical checkup. If they were ill, most of them were self-medicated by buying drugs or go to private health care centre. One hundred percent of the respondent had no access to health service facilities from City Corporation’s hospital.

Table 6: Social and psychological health problems: Almost every one (men) had bad health behavior in terms of smoking and drinking alcohol. Results also indicated that the health risk behaviors of smoking, alcohol consumption endangered the health of the scavengers. In addition, they still face social abuses from society, which lead to social problems. In order to make life more meaningful for scavengers and waste pickers, better working condition is essential. However, they depend on their hereditary profession for their livelihood.

Table 6: Social and psychological health problems:

SL	Social and psychological health problems	Number	%
1	Alcohol consumption	34	68%
2	Smoking	27	54%
3	Gambling	12	24%
4	Betel chewing	50	100%
5	Family problems	50	100%
One may have more than two habits			

Source: Field Survey, 2013



Photo: While speaking with researchers they share that they spend most of their lives at work but surprisingly get no benefit except stress, tension and a little shelter from the government.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Majority of the respondent visited the private doctors due to the neglected behavior of the city corporation's doctor. A large number of respondent said that they had no annual medical checkups. If they got sick they habitually were self-medicated. Physical diseases included common colds, headaches, skin rashes, and low back pain. It was not often possible to establish a direct correlation between the occupation and the disease because their living conditions were bad as well.

Dalit scavengers have very poor access to basic facilities such as sanitation, clean water or clean household facility etc. They use a common toilet in their colony. No separate toilet is available for female. Pure drinking water is not available in the community and even they do not refine or boiled the drinking water. The study results revealed that these people live in unhygienic conditions and the nature of their occupational exposure lead them to the spread of various diseases. These scavengers believe that washing and bathing is an essential part of health and hygiene but they are unable to do so due to the lack of facilities.

Though City Corporation has promoted waste management services as a strategy of achieving better cleanliness of Dhake City. But, the scavengers who are responsible for cleanliness of Dhaka city they earn below the national minimum wage, although they work under difficult working conditions.

5.2. Recommendations

In this study, only one sweeper colony was visited within a short period. In order to have more accurate and detailed information for knowing the real situations of scavenger's occupational hazards, more data of the related study should also be needed.

- Trade Union Formation: It is important to form Trade union, because trade unions have the power to identify the issue of scavenger as a labour issue and work on the line of decent work for all. Trade union can bring about mass activity on legal awareness context to Scavenging.
- Policy Creating: To understand the issue of decent work, working condition as well as coordination with NGOs, GO's where they can discussed, interact among themselves

and work together to improve occupational safety and health and job security among traditional scavengers.

- Awareness and sensitization campaign: GO and NGO both should take initiatives of awareness and sensitization programme on Human rights, Capacity building training on scavenging and Decent work .

- Safety measures distribution: It is important that the government should distribute health and safety materials including necessary equipments like mask, hand gloves, boots, aprons, garbage collecting tools, to the scavenger.
- Occupational health services and Monitor safety practices: Scavengers ought to be benefited from occupational health services, which should include periodic health monitoring and hospital services.

- Training and Health Care Centre establishment: It is important to establish a training centre on every sweeper's colony. Where they can get motivation and inspiration to use PPE at work. Prevention is more effective and less costly than treatment and rehabilitation.
- And it is also essential to establish health care centre in every sweeper's colony. Because a vast population living in those colony and they were deprived governments health care facilities and many public facilities.

- More research on this topic must be conducted, especially regarding health care services and facilities of the City Corporation.
- The City Corporation can take concrete steps now to improve their capacity for preventing occupational diseases.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendices 1: Glossary

Dalit (Scavengers): The word “Dalit” comes from the Sanskrit root dal- and means “broken, ground-down, downtrodden, or oppressed.” Those previously known as Untouchables, Depressed Classes, and Harijans are today increasingly adopting the term “Dalit” as a name for themselves. “Dalit” refers to one’s caste rather than class; it applies to members of those menial castes which have borne the stigma of “untouchability” because of the extreme impurity and pollution connected with their traditional occupations. Dalits are ‘outcastes’ falling outside the traditional four-fold caste system consisting of the hereditary Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra classes; they are considered impure and polluting and are therefore physically and socially excluded and isolated from the rest of society.

Due to their caste identity Dalits regularly face discrimination and violence which prevent them from enjoying the basic human rights and dignity . Caste-based social organization extends beyond India, finding corollaries in Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh, as well as other countries outside of South Asia (see below). More than 260 million people worldwide suffer from this “hidden apartheid” of segregation, exclusion, and discrimination. In Bangladesh Dalit’s were traditionally sweepers and manual scavengers¹⁴

Hazard: A situation that may cause damage or harm. For the purposes of this Manual, the term “hazard” refers to dangerous working conditions present in the work processes that generate increased exposure and increased probability of risk to workers’ health and to the integrity or productivity of the establishment.

Risk: Possibility or probability of a damage, ailment or injury. For the purposes of this Manual, the term “risk” refers to the probability of an adverse health effect, such as a disease.

Scavenger: Scavenger appears as an occupation in the 1911 Census of England and Wales. This job title was used to describe someone who cleans the streets and removes refuse, generally a workman (a modern-day garbage collector, janitor, or street cleaner)

¹⁴ (<http://ncdhr.org.in/dalits-untouchability/>).

employed by the local public health authority. The name is properly "scavenger" or "scaveger", an official who was concerned with the receipt of custom duties and the inspection (scavage) of imported goods. The "scavengers" are found with such officials of the City of London as an aleconner or beadle. These officials seem to have been charged also with the cleaning of the streets, and the name superseded the older raker for those who performed this duty. These professions are essential to urban settings operating at the highest capacity. The garbage collection jobs and scavenging professions allow urban populations to continue unhindered by outbreaks and disease most commonly brought by the build-up of physical waste. These jobs were of the most importance before the time of functional sewer systems and indoor plumbing¹⁵.

Mix methods Study: The essential goal of mixed methods research is to tackle a given research question from any relevant angle, making use where appropriate of previous research and/or more than one type of investigative perspective. Sometimes referred to as mixed methodology, multiple methodology or multi-methodology research, mixed methods research offers you the best of both worlds: the in-depth, contextualized, and natural but more time-consuming insights of qualitative research coupled with the more-efficient but less rich or compelling predictive power of quantitative research.

These approaches are far more comprehensive than attacking a problem from only one point of view and, with the emergence of strategies and tools for blending these different types of data, allow for the crossing of disciplinary boundaries like never before.

Although a relatively new approach, mixed methods research has been embraced by the scientific community in their practice, academic journals, and major volumes of work like the Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research by Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie. As Cornell psychologist William Trochim puts it: "...[any] kind of polarized debate has become less than productive. And, it obscures the fact that qualitative and quantitative data are intimately related to each other. All quantitative data is based on qualitative judgments; and all qualitative data can be described and manipulated numerically."

Occupational health and safety: Occupational health and safety is a discipline with a broad scope involving many specialized fields. In its broadest sense, it should aim at:

- the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations;

¹⁵ (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Scavenger&action=edit§ion=4>)

- the prevention among workers of adverse effects on health caused by their working conditions;
- the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health;
- the placing and maintenance of workers in an occupational environment adapted to physical and mental needs;
- the adaptation of work to humans.

In other words, occupational health and safety encompasses the **social, mental and physical well-being of workers**, that is the “whole person”.

Successful occupational health and safety practice requires the collaboration and participation of both employers and workers in health and safety programmes, and involves the consideration of issues relating to occupational medicine, industrial hygiene, toxicology, education, engineering safety, ergonomics, psychology, etc.

Occupational **health** issues are often given less attention than occupational **safety** issues because the former are generally more difficult to confront. However, when health is addressed, so is safety, because a healthy workplace is by definition also a safe workplace. The converse, though, may not be true - a so-called safe workplace is not necessarily also a healthy workplace. The important point is that **issues of both health and safety must be addressed in every workplace**. By and large, the definition of occupational health and safety given above encompasses **both health and safety** in their broadest contexts.

Poor working conditions affect worker health and safety

- Poor working conditions of any type have the potential to affect a worker's health and safety.
- Unhealthy or unsafe working conditions are not limited to factories — they can be found anywhere, whether the workplace is indoors or outdoors. For many workers, such as agricultural workers or miners, the workplace is “outdoors” and can pose many health and safety hazards.
- Poor working conditions can also affect the environment workers live in, since the working and living environments are the same for many workers. This means that occupational hazards can have harmful effects on workers, their families, and other people in the community, as well as on the physical environment around the workplace. A classic example is the use of pesticides in agricultural work. Workers can be exposed to toxic chemicals in a number of ways when spraying pesticides: they can inhale the chemicals during and after spraying, the chemicals can be

absorbed through the skin, and the workers can ingest the chemicals if they eat, drink, or smoke without first washing their hands, or if drinking water has become contaminated with the chemicals. The workers' families can also be exposed in a number of ways: they can inhale the pesticides which may linger in the air, they can drink contaminated water, or they can be exposed to residues which may be on the worker's clothes. Other people in the community can all be exposed in the same ways as well. When the chemicals get absorbed into the soil or leach into groundwater supplies, the adverse effects on the natural environment can be permanent.

Overall, efforts in occupational health and safety must aim to **prevent** industrial accidents and diseases, and at the same time recognize the connection between worker health and safety, the workplace, and the environment outside the workplace.

Snowball Sampling Technique: Sampling is easy to establish in quantitative research designs. The sampling frame can easily be extracted once the population universe is established and the appropriate sampling formula is identified. However, qualitative research is not as lucky. Establishing the sample and the sampling process in qualitative inquiry is almost often a subject of contention, and takes much more time in persuading panel members during research defense sessions. A systematic sampling process in qualitative research designs is rarely established. Often, what is used is a very arbitrary and uninformed purposive sampling technique (sample identified on purpose). It is indeed difficult, but should not be impossible.

The snowballing sampling technique is a systematic non-probabilistic purposive sampling method that is very apt for qualitative research. Highly qualitative and exploratory studies call for a purposive non-probability sampling design, which is not after the representativeness of samples. A purposive non-probability sampling design relies heavily on the availability of respondents, especially those who are difficult to locate for interviews.

A snowballing sampling technique can be employed to seek out informants or respondents, who are otherwise difficult to locate and identify. The snowballing sampling technique is most proper when the members of the target respondents are difficult to locate. A snowball is the process of accumulation of referrals as each located and interviewed informant suggests other informants whom they happen to know and locate. For Arce, it “**results from one key informant being interviewed and asked for suggestions on who else might be good informants, and the next informant is chosen on the basis of this suggestion.**” As an opportunity sampling technique, the informants were selected and interviewed mainly

because they were located and made available for and in a particular study. David used accidental non-probability sampling technique as a derivative of the opportunity sampling technique. In accidental sampling technique, the respondents were chosen as they become available. This technique resembled that of Garson's chain sampling method, where the aim is to "**obtain a saturation of informants....to reveal common cultural understanding....in a chaining process.**"¹⁶

¹⁶ (<http://cyberron.blogspot.com/2009/07/snowballing-sampling-technique.html>).

Appendices 2: References

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5. Nagorik Uddyog (NU) is a human rights organization working with Dalit and socially excluded communities to support their human rights struggle. www.nuhr.org
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