

# RIGHT TO HEALTH

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF SANITATION  
WORKERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

A CALL FOR ACCOUNTABLE ACTION



*Dr. Kaustuv K Bandyopadhyay*  
*Director, PRIA, India*  
[www.pria.org](http://www.pria.org)



India's 5 million sanitation workers (half of them are women) are the most vulnerable front line workers

---

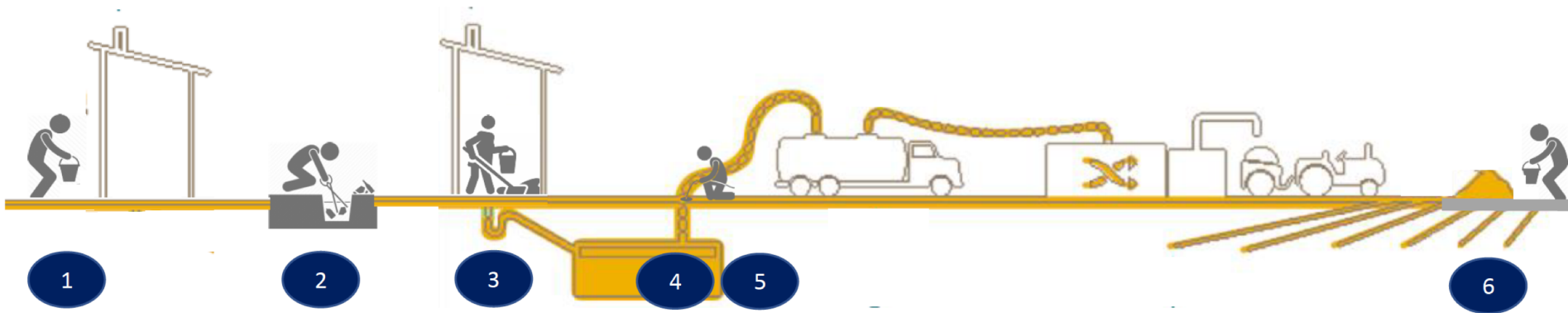
Sanitation work is considered as 'dirty' and done only by the Scheduled Castes (Dalits) for centuries

---

Being a sanitation worker means – facing social stigma, untouchability, indignity, oppression and sexual harassment – generation after generation

---

## Types of sanitation workers in liquid waste management



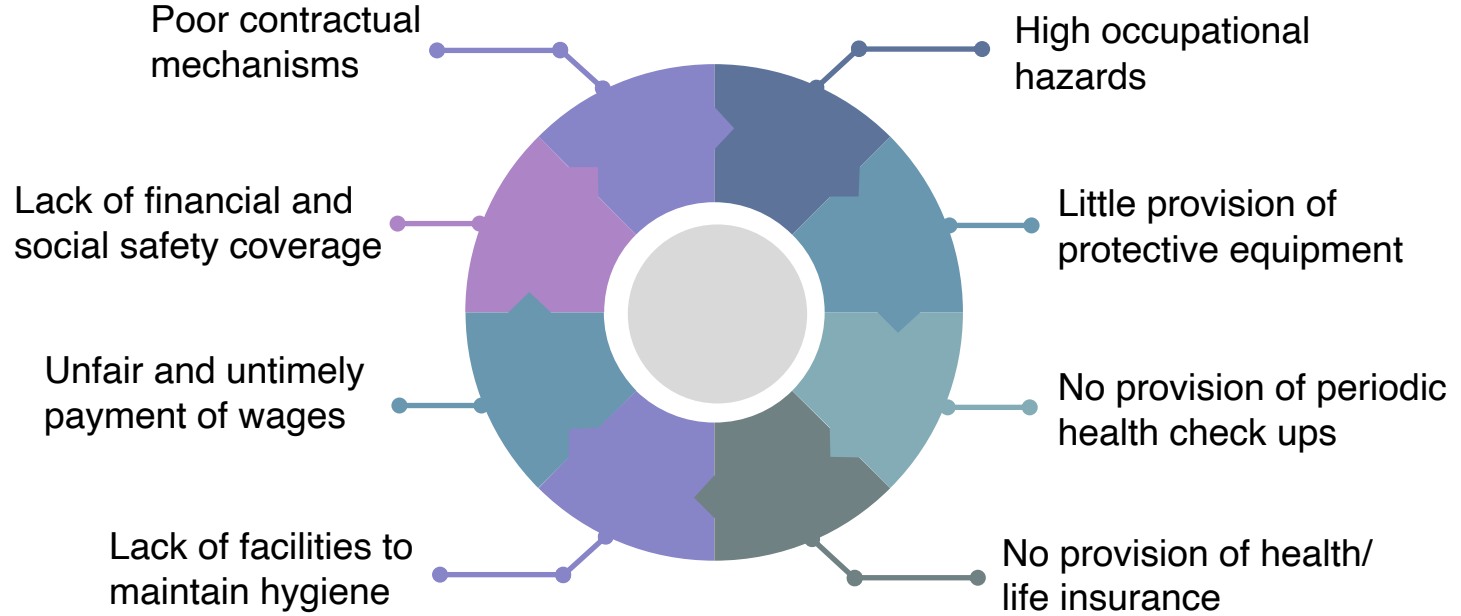
1. Latrine Cleaner 2. Drain Cleaner 3. Community Toilet/ Public Toilet Cleaner 4. Septic Tank Deslugger 5. Sewer Cleaner 6. Treatment Plant Worker

## Types of sanitation workers in solid waste management



7. Street Sweeper 8. Institutional Waste Collector (Hospitals And Quarantine Centres) 9. Domestic Waste Collector 10. Informal Waste Picker 11. Worker At Waste Processing Facility

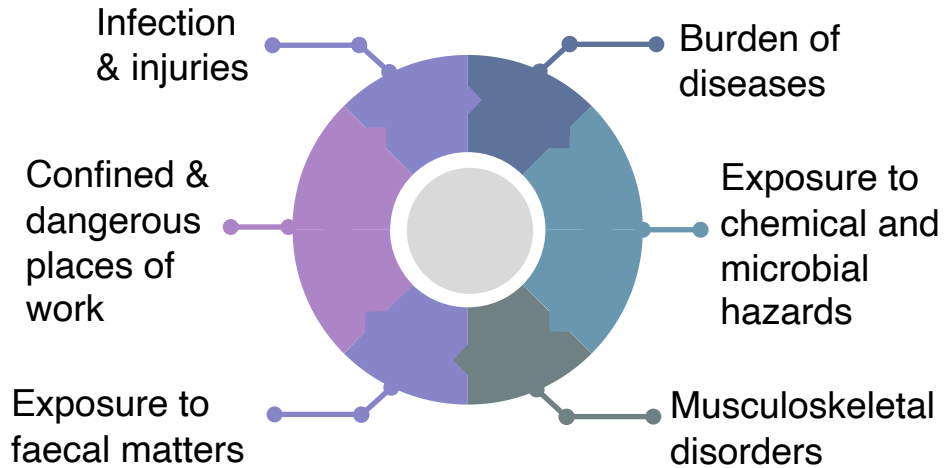
# ISSUES FACED BY SANITATION WORKERS



Vulnerability and insecurity increases with nature of employment

▷ Permanent ▷ Contractual ▷ Outsourced

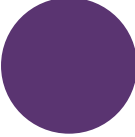




# OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARD FACED BY SANITATION WORKERS



# INCREASED HEALTH RISKS DURING COVID-19

- Cleaning of hospitals & quarantine centres
- Cleaning & garbage collection from the households including containment zones
- Possible contamination of wastewater and sewage

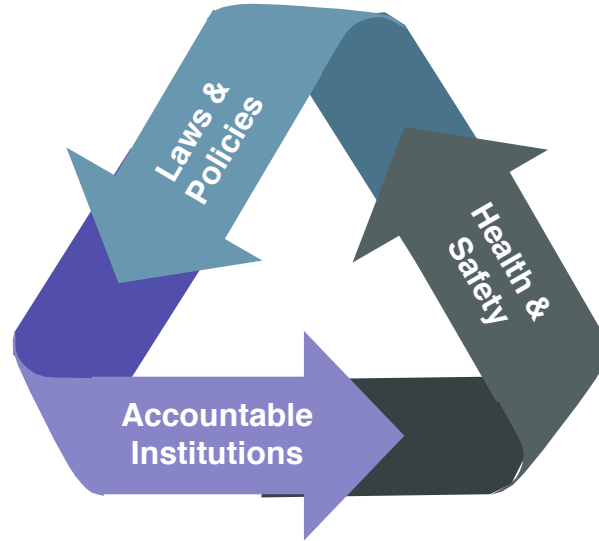
# HOW CIVIL SOCIETY RESPONDED TO EXACT ACCOUNTABILITY

-  Distribution of safety gears – PPE, Gloves, Boots, Sanitizer, etc.
-  Providing innovative technology, equipment including portable hand washing station
-  Undertaking participatory and collaborative surveys and research studies
-  Co-convening a series of multi-stakeholder dialogues seeking attention of the policy makers
-  Drafting SOPs and engaging with the ministries of national and state governments as well as with local governance institution

# A CALL FOR ACTION

Creating enforceable  
legislation & policies

Strengthening  
institutions and holding  
them accountable



Improving working  
conditions to ensure  
occupational health,  
Safety & social protections