

Case Study

Initiatives for Safety and Dignity of Sanitation Workers in Warangal during COVID-19

Leading Practice by

Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation

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Impact of Initiatives



Even during the current COVID-19 pandemic, sanitation workers continue to manage collection and management, cleaning of toilets, cleaning/disinfection of public places, and other sanitation services such as desludging, drain cleaning etc. Their work requires them to move across different locations, interact with several people and work in high-risk settings including health care facilities, quarantine centres and containment zones. The lack of personal protective equipment and other safety measures at work puts sanitation workers at a high risk of COVID. Getting infected with COVID-19 can lead to an added layer of stigma and discrimination which can lead to loss of livelihood and difficulties in availing proper health care services.

This case study of the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation brings out a range of initiatives ranging from access to PPE, periodic health check-ups, empathetic approach of managers, and monetary incentives. This is also evident from the high morale of sanitation workers, enhanced trust between administration and sanitation workers and zero COVID-19 cases reported amongst sanitation workers as of 10 Aug 2020.

Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation



Area: 407.7 sq km

Population: 8,30,000

No of wards: 58

Sanitation is a function of GWMC's Public Health branch
2754

Total sanitation employees

289 Permanent employees

2302 Outsourced employees
(through third-party contractor)

163 Contract employees
(direct contract with GWMC)

1252
Female employees

1502
Male employees

Shifts: 4:00AM-9:00AM | 2:00PM-5:00PM(main road)
5:00AM-10:00AM | 2:00PM-5:00PM(other areas)

837 rag-pickers (GWMC 2017 data)

Sanitation Workers in Warangal

Type of Worker	Work Definition
Sanitary Jawan	Supervisors that coordinate between Sanitary Inspector and Workers
Public Health (PH) worker	Public Health workers assigned work as per requirement. Eg: desilting drains, work at transfer station, etc
Tricycle worker	Workers who previously handled D2D waste collection on tricycles, but now mostly go with Swachh Autos
Swachh Auto driver	Workers that drive GWMC's D2D waste-collection autos, and collect waste.
Tractor driver	Drivers of GWMC tractors that transport waste to transfer station and dump yard
Sweeper	Workers who sweep the streets

Sanitation Workers in Warangal

Type of Worker	Type of Employment						
	Permanent		Outsourced		Contracted		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Sanitary Jawan	28	5	78	5			116
PH worker	118	138	925	618			1799
Tricycle worker			14	205			219
Swachh Auto driver						163	163
Tractor driver			1	85			86
Sweeper			184	187			371
Total	289		2302		1603		2754

Monitoring of Sanitation Work



Image source: GWMC

Municipal Health Officer
(1)

Sanitary Supervisor
(1)

Sanitary Inspectors
(17)

Sanitary Jawans
(116)

Sanitation Workers
(2591)

Coordinate via
Whatsapp

Work allotment; passing
of instructions

Work allotment; on-site
supervision; attendance at
work spot

Protective Gear Provided to Workers during COVID-19

Type of Worker	Types of PPE given by GWMC to each worker				
	Mask	Gloves	Jacket	Hat	Gum boots
Sanitary Jawan	✓	✓	✓		
PH worker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tricycle worker	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Swachh auto driver	✓	✓			
Tractor driver	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sweeper	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Protective Gear Provided to Workers during COVID-19

Procurement details of each type of PPE given by GWMC to each worker

	Mask		Gloves			Hat
	Surgical	Cloth	Surgical	Nitrile	Washable	
Types	Surgical	Cloth	Surgical	Nitrile	Washable	
Number	4000	4000	4000	3000	3000	3900
Cost (Rs.)	1,60,000	80,000	1,20,000	3,18,000	1,29,000	7,60,500
Fund source	GWMC General Fund	GWMC General Fund	GWMC General Fund	COVID-19 CSR Fund	COVID-19 CSR Fund	COVID-19 CSR Fund
Procured from	Warangal	Warangal	Warangal	Secunderabad	Secunderabad	Secunderabad

Protective Gear Provided to Workers during COVID-19



Image source: GWMC

No reliance on contractors

GWMC provided gear to all permanent and outsourced sanitation workers

Manual attendance

As an additional safety measure, GWMC replaced biometric attendance with manual attendance

Challenges

Disposable gloves not reaching every worker on a daily basis.

Workers using kerchiefs instead of the provided surgical masks.

Workers not changing out of work clothes once reaching home.

Solutions

Workers were given reusable, washable gloves that last 3 months.

Workers were given cloth masks stitched by local SHGs which they found comfortable to wear.

Workers received 2 sets of work uniforms each.

Essentials



Image source: GWMC



© UMC

Full pay

No sanitary workers- permanent and outsourced, underwent pay cut. ESI and EPF provisions are in place.

Free lunch

Due to early work hours, sanitation workers weren't able to cook meals in the morning. GWMC provided lunch to sanitation workers at Annapurna Canteens.

Ration

By State order, ration card holders received food essentials. Donations from other sources were also directed towards sanitation workers. All the workers have ration cards.

Soap and sanitiser

GWMC distributed soaps and sanitisers to sanitation workers on a weekly basis.

Sanitary napkins

Women workers are given a pack of *Cheli* (SHG-produced) sanitary napkins each month

Incentives



State grant

Under the Chief Minister's Special Incentive to recognise frontline employees; all sanitation workers (both permanent and outsourced) were given Rs. 5,000 each. (refer Annexure)



Image source: GWMC

Wall of honour

Screen set up in GWMC displayed photos of exemplary workers, and an award of Rs. 500 each was given to 20 workers fortnightly.

IEC and Training



Instruction from supervisors

Sanitation workers received verbal instructions from Sanitary Inspectors and Sanitary Jawans on COVID-19 symptoms and precautions during attendance check. They were instructed to report if they showed symptoms.

Waste-collection training

By State order, waste-collection workers in containment zones were trained to use full PPE, double-bag waste in yellow bags, disinfect bags, hand over for incineration.

Swachh Autos

163 waste-collection Swachh Autos play audio advisories for the public on COVID-19 in Telugu. Workers involved in waste management and those on ground repeatedly hear this.

Posters and hoardings

All advertisement spaces in the city-medians, hoardings, etc. were changed to advisories on COVID-19 in Telugu. Workers and service seekers see these constantly.

Empathetic Support towards Sanitation Workers



Improved perception of the public towards sanitation workers as frontline workers, with vocal appreciation and gifts from the public.



Regular interaction with their superior officers in the Municipal Corporation, where they are treated with respect and the importance of their work is conveyed.

Successes

Authorities sensitive to worker needs, and measures taken accordingly (Eg: surgical masks replaced with cloth).

No absenteeism among sanitation workers even at peak of pandemic indicating satisfaction with safety measures made available.

Workers have taken initiative to protect themselves, and share info on COVID-19 precautions.



Image source: GWMC

Challenges

Workers discard PPE after a couple of hours due to heat and discomfort.

Women workers lack access to changing rooms and washrooms near their location of work.

Permanent staff collecting full salary while employing benami workers to do their jobs at a fraction of the pay.

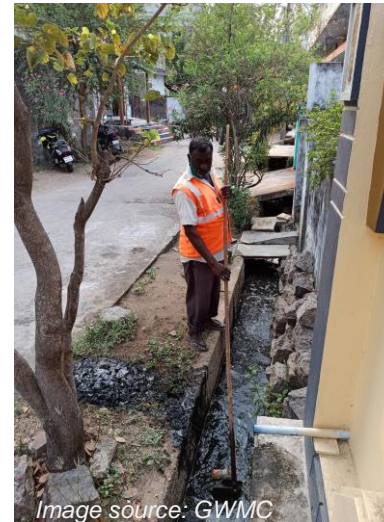


Image source: GWMC



Image source: GWMC

Learnings



Equal benefits for both permanent and outsourced workers, and no docking of pay under crisis.



Protective gear provided must be responsive to worker comfort and on-ground experience.



Regular checks, and linking with health infrastructure helps keep track of worker health and prevent COVID-19 outbreak amongst sanitation staff.



Addressing material insecurities by providing essentials and incentives minimises fear and improves well-being among workers



City and State governments must earmark funds for sanitation worker safety, and identify additional sources such as CSR funds.

“How can sanitation workers believe their work is worthy unless there is dignity of labour, and their quality of life is improved?”

-Smt. Pamela Satpathy, IAS
Municipal Commissioner, GWMC
30 June 2020

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GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ABSTRACT

COVID -19 - Relief Operations – Sanction of Chief Minister's Special Incentive to certain categories of employees for the month of April, 2020 – Orders – Issued.

FINANCE (TFR) DEPARTMENT

G.O.Ms.No.33

Dated:21.04.2020

Read the following:-

1. The Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897
2. The Disaster Management Act, 2005
3. G.O.Ms.No.45, General Administration Department, dated: 22.3.2020.
4. G.O.Ms.No.46, General Administration Department, dated: 23.3.2020.
5. G.O.Ms.No.31, Finance (TFR) Department, dated:07.04.2020.
6. G.O.Ms.No.60, General Administration (Covid) Department, dated:19.04.2020.

& & &

ORDER:

The Government in recognition of the services of Health, Medical, Sanitary, Police and other related employees who are attending COVID-19 relief operations, have decided to grant a monetary incentive as a token of encouragement. Accordingly, Government hereby sanction payment of Chief Minister's Special Incentive to the following categories of employees/personnel for the month of April, 2020, as below:

- i. All regular, Contract and Outsourced personnel of Medical and Health department @10% of their gross salary/remuneration.
- ii. All regular, Contract and Outsourced personnel of Police i.e., under the administrative control of Home Department, whose salaries/remuneration are being drawn under Major Head of Accounts - 2055-Police and 2070-Other Administrative Services, @10% of their gross salary/remuneration.
- iii. All regular and outsourced Sanitation Employees/personnel of GHMC @ Rs.7,500/-
- iv. All regular and outsourced Water Supply Linemen and Sewerage Workers of GHMC @ Rs.7,500/-
- v. All regular and outsourced Sanitation Employees/personnel of all Municipal Corporations and Municipalities other than GHMC @ Rs.5,000/-
- vi. All regular and outsourced Sanitary and Multi Purpose Workers of Gram Panchayats @Rs.5,000/-.

2. The above incentive is to be drawn and paid to only those employees and persons who have actually attended to duties during the month of April, 2020 and not to those who are on leave, suspension or unauthorized absence. The expenditure towards the Incentive as indicated at para 1(i & ii) above shall be met from the concerned head of account and in respect of personnel mentioned in para 1(iii to vi), it shall be met from the releases made by the Government for COVID-19 Relief Operations. It is the concerned DDOs responsibility that these amounts are drawn in strict compliance of the above instructions and any excess payments done would be dealt with seriously.

3. The Special Chief Secretary, HM&FW Department, Pri. Secretary Home Department, Pri. Secretary, MA&UD Department, Secretary, PR&RD Department, Director of Treasuries and Accounts, Director of Works and Accounts, Pay and Accounts Officer, Hyderabad and the Director of State Audit shall take necessary further action in the matter, accordingly.

(BY ORDER AND IN THE NAME OF THE GOVERNOR OF TELANGANA)

K.RAMAKRISHNA RAO
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

To
The Special Chief Secretary, HM&FW Department
The Pri. Secretary, MA&UD Department
The Pri. Secretary, Home Department.
The Secretary, PR&RD Department
The Director of Treasuries & Accounts, Hyderabad.
The Director of Works and Accounts, Hyderabad.
The Pay and Accounts Officer, Hyderabad.
The Director of State Audit, Hyderabad.
Copy to:
The Director General of Police, Hyderabad.
The Accountant General, AP&TS, Hyderabad.
The General Administration (Covid) Department.
The General Administration (Cabinet) Department.
The P.S. to Chief Secretary to Government
The P.S. to Chief Advisor to Government
The P.S. to Pri. Secretary to Hon'ble C.M.
The P.S. to Pri. Finance Secretary
SF/SCs