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**A study to understand the occupational impact on the
children of manual scavengers from Arunthaiyar
community in Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram and
Salem Districts in Tamil Nadu, India**

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**For
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“For in India a man is not scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth, irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not”

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Foreword

About twenty percent of Indian population is constituted by Dalits. Caste based suppression and untouchability on this people is in force as an unwritten law for almost 2000 years. Only in India, one occupation for suppressed and another occupation for the higher strata have been assigned. In TamilNadu one of these inhuman occupations that are forced on Arunthathiyar community is manual scavenging. Though, there are several laws and schemes are to eradicate this, it is still continued in the caste based Hindu society. The cruelty of cleaning human excreta by another human being must be eradicated. We have arranged for this study on behalf of the **Arunthathiyar Human Rights Forum (AHRF)** in order to find out how the children of manual scavengers are affected by this occupation and to take subsequent steps to eradicate the menace.

I thank **Mr. K. Narayanaswamy** and his colleagues at the **Center for Social Research, Coimbatore-Satyamangalam, Tamilnadu** who have completed this research study in its full form and the district functionaries of **AHRF** for the cooperation rendered to collect necessary data for the children and **EVERYCHILD**. organization especially **Mr. G. Sriramappa**, Country Director-EveryChild India who supported us to carry out the research study.

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Preface

The book in your hand is a result of a research project on understanding status of Arunthaiyar children in Tamil Nadu entrusted to Centre for Social Research by EveryChild through AHRF TamilNadu. Manual scavenging is an inhuman occupation forced on the Arunthaiyars community. The plight of the children of the manual scavengers is the worst in the society due to the abhorrent nature of the work done by the Arunthaiyar parents. We feel proud to have this opportunity to present a detailed study on the children of Arunthaiyar manual scavengers which would be useful for the development of education and social status.

Our sincere thanks go to the Principal Researcher and Team Leader Dr. Ravikumar for his co-operation and tireless work in data collection in the study area. We are immensely thankful to Mr.M.Sachithanandam who compiled the data and information and prepared this report in this shape.

We also extend our thanks to the field investigators in the study area i.e., Mr.Kannadasan of Ramanathapuram district Mr.Devarajan of Erode district Mr.Bannan of Salem district and Mr.Selvam of Coimbatore district.

We express our heartfelt thanks to state convener AHRF Tamilnadu Mr. Karuppusamy only with whose support till the end made this task complete and Mr. G. Sriramappa-Country Director of EveryChild India; (former) Programmes Manager-Ms. Asha Zechariah and Advocacy & Communications Manager-Ms. Payal Saksena and also to all the members of AHRF for their valuable suggestions and co-ordination from time to time.

Thanks to the Government officials at the district level who spared their valuable time to participate in the discussions and interviews with the research team. We thank all

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The political leaders, community leaders and leaders of trade unions in the study districts willingly offered their views and suggestions to be incorporated in the study. We acknowledge Mr.Rajamanickam, Dr.Amletkar sanitary workers sangam Ramanathapuram district Mr.Duraisamy state vice president, CITU local body workers association, Mr.Manickam District Secretary Erode, and State Committee, CITU, Mr.Aran, President, Sanitary workers association Sathyamangalam, General Secretary AITUC Coimbatore district, Com. Ashokan Salem district.

The other social activists whose suggestions are incorporated in the study are Mr.Adiyaman, founder- *Adi Thamilar Peravai*, Mr.K.Shanmugan - Mr.R.Mahali community leader, Tharamangalam, Salem district.

Our special thanks go to Mr.Niraimathi film director “vidiyumvarai’ a documentary film on Manual scavengers of Salem Corporation and Mr.Govindaraj of *Imaigal Samooga Nala Amaippu*, Coimbatore for kindly permitting us to use the clippings and part of interviews from their video and still film collection.

Our special thanks also go to all the members and staff of READ organization.

Sathyamangalam,
2009

K.Narayanaswamy
Centre for Social Research

Executive Summary

Arunthaiyar children in Tamil Nadu

All across the world there are many children who are living without parental care or in inadequate care. The figures are quite high and according to EveryChild (an international child rights charity), working in parts of Asia, Africa and parts of Former Soviet Union countries, it is almost more than 24 million children who grow up without parental care. These children's survival is often threatened by greater risk of malnutrition, violence and exploitation; their future lost by missing out on school and their childhood. According to UNICEF Child protection Information Sheet (2006) there are 87.6 million child orphans in Asia constituting the highest number in the world. But in several countries including India, no data is systematically compiled about these children at the national or sub-national level.

Tamil Nadu is a large state among the 28 states in India being about the eleventh largest by area and the seventh most populous state. It is one of the largest contributors to India's Gross domestic Product and the most urbanised state in India.¹ However despite the development, the child sex ratio with 942 girls per 1000 boys as per the 2001 Census is on a downward journey from 948 in 1991. This could be due to issues of child malnutrition or neonatal mortality or prevalence of infanticide and female feticide. Children are affected by the impact of socio-cultural identities and caste, gender, urbanisation and globalisation have a direct impact on women and children.

Tamil Nadu is also one of the states which has a high population of the Arunthaiyar community. Pallar, Parayar and Arunthaiyar are the three major dalit groups in the state of Tamil Nadu. Among them, Arunthaiyars are considered to be the lowest in the dalit hierarchy, the 'Dalit among Dalits' - the 'untouchables'. It is one of the most

¹ Directorate of Economics & Statistics of respective State Governments and for All India-Central Statistical Organisation-28/02/2008

oppressed, depressed and the poorest among the poor in the Indian Society. In Tamil Nadu, Arunthaiyars are densely concentrated in the western districts namely Coimbatore, Erode, Tirupur, Karur, Namakkal, Salem and Dharmapuri districts and loosely spread over in the other parts of the state. There are about 60,00,000 Arunthaiyars in Tamil Nadu. They are also identified with different names such as Chakkliar, Thoti, Madiga, Pagadai, Adi Andra, Madiga and Madari in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Often compelled to do very menial low dignified jobs, Arunthaiyars are more vulnerable to be forced to perform all undignified tasks (manual scavenging, death messages for upper caste community, dead body burials, dead cattle removal, drum beating in upper caste death funerals etc.) in the society. Poor living conditions, desperate search for a dignified livelihood and decent wages, constant exploitation and harassment from moneylenders and upper caste landlords are part of the day-to-day life of an Arunthaiyar.

Their children are most exploited and abused and face discrimination at the hands of the upper caste community and lag behind or outside the sphere of quality education, health, development and participation. The United National Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) core principles of promoting survival, development, protection and participation of children still remain a distant reality for the Arunthaiyar children. The children are not sent to school because of the poor socio economic status of this community. Many Arunthaiyar children having dropped out of school are part of the labour force in the industries, construction sites and brick kiln sites, many children work as bonded agricultural labourers or rope makers, domestic labourers or work in restaurants or tea shops. The children face rampant discrimination and social exclusionary practices like the two tumbler system, forced to clean toilets in schools, calling them by derogatory names and treating them as untouchables takes these children deeper in the web of exploitation and marginalisation. The look of these children indicates that they are impoverished, malnourished and anaemic.

In this situation when a majority of the Arunthaiyar community work as manual scavengers or bonded labourers, working on the agricultural farms, rope making, construction sites, the children are mostly left behind by their parents to fend for themselves while they go to work. If the child is too young, the child is left in the care of extended families or relatives or the neighbourhood community while the parents go to work. In cases when the child becomes an adolescent, he/she starts working to support the families. Most of these children never go to school or would have dropped out of school due to caste based discrimination and ridicule and humiliation they face on a daily basis in the school or in the public sphere. Hence even though these children may have parents, they do not have 'parental care'. The presence of parents does not ensure quality care and it is inadequate for the holistic development of these children.

Arunthaiyar Human Rights Forum (AHRF):

Arunthaiyar Human Rights Forum is a state level human rights forum formed in 2005. It comprises of young Arunthaiyar activists working in 14 community based organisations across 12 districts in western Tamil Nadu. Out of the 14 organisations, two community based organisations - namely Rights and Education Centre (READ) at Sathyamangalam, Erode and Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT) at Salem are EveryChild's programme partners on the 'Engal Kural'² (Our voice) programme. AHRF is working specifically towards creating awareness on discrimination and atrocities against Arunthaiyars; eradication of manual scavenging primarily associated with Arunthaiyars; fighting against the scourge of untouchability. The forum's strategy has been to mobilise and empower the Arunthaiyar community by forming thrift and credit societies towards sustainable economic stability; document and report caste based atrocities faced by Arunthaiyars to National and State level

² EveryChild *Engal Kural* programme focuses on prevention of exploitation and marginalization of Arunthaiyar children without parental care or at risk of losing parental care under the bonded labour system in Tamil Nadu

Human rights Institutions; access to quality primary and higher education for Arunthaiyar children and strengthening Arunthaiyar men and women's political participation. It conducts periodic trainings and leads on research initiatives to gain a deeper understanding of the status of Arunthaiyar women and children in Tamil Nadu. In 2008, AHRF had organized its first state level Arunthaiyar cultural night event to create a platform for the Arunthaiyar community to reclaim and assert their socio-cultural identity.

- **Vision:** To come together to build a state level forum and demand rights and entitlements for the Arunthaiyar community
- Form the central platform for joint action for the member organizations: undertake advocacy and lobbying with a unified voice, particularly at state, national and international level: form the focal point for capacity building and training.
- Towards change: Political, cultural, social, economic and educational upward mobility of Arunthaiyar community- especially women and children

EveryChild is an international development charity fighting to protect some of the world's most vulnerable children without parental care or in inadequate care. It works in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South America and the Caribbean. EveryChild believes that all children have the right to grow up in a safe and loving family environment, with a secure future. More than 24 million children grow up without parental care, their survival often threatened by greater risk of malnutrition, violence and exploitation; their future lost by missing out on school, and their childhood. Working with local partners across countries, EveryChild keep children safe when they are alone and at risk. EveryChild protects children in danger of ending up on their own by keeping families together and get children back to a safe and caring family, wherever it is possible.

In India, EveryChild has been supporting programmes and partners based in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu on the issue of most marginalized children without parental care/ or in inadequate care who are trafficked/at risk of being trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) and forced labour including domestic workers and children who are living and working on the streets.

AHRF and EveryChild: common focus on ‘children without parental care’ or ‘children in inadequate parental care/at risk of losing parental care’

Towards the fulfilment of its vision and mission, EveryChild in India has been supporting and strengthening AHRF to respond to the issues of Arunthiyar children at risk of losing parental care or without parental care in Tamil Nadu. The focus of EveryChild and AHRF has been to respond to the issue of children without parental care.

AHRF and EveryChild, as a part of the situation analysis have identified Arunthiyar children without parental care in Tamil Nadu in the following categories:

- Children without parental care: child bonded laborers; girl children working in textile industries under Sumangali Thittam; child laborers working on brick kiln sites, rope making, construction sites, restaurants, tea-stalls
- Children at risk of losing parental care/ lack of adequate parental care. : children left behind by parents engaged in manual scavenging; children of seasonal or temporarily migrant parents; children of agricultural labourers; school drop outs; HIV/AIDS affected/infected children

AHRF and EveryChild’s Research Initiative: 2008-2010

Within the above mentioned categories of Arunthiyar children, few categories were prioritised by AHRF and EveryChild. In 2008, four studies were commissioned by

EveryChild through AHRF in order to understand the status of Arundhatiyar children in western Tamil Nadu.

In the present study to understand the occupational impact on the children of manual scavengers 200 Arundhatiyar children were covered. The children were from Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram and Salem Districts of Tamil Nadu.

The main objectives of the study are as follows:

- To explore the educational problems faced by the children of Arundhatiyar manual scavengers.
- To unearth the types and quantum of discrimination-social, culture, economic, education against the manual scavengers' children in various settings-like school, temple, community, peer groups, government schemes etc.
- To understand the consequences and after effect of the social exclusion of the children of Arundhatiyar community working as manual scavengers.
- To assess the impact of rehabilitation measures undertaken by the Government & NGOs for the Arundhatiyar community and children's lives quality education, prevent child labour and health and nutrition.
- To suggest alternative course of action / improvements to the existing system of rehabilitation and empowerment action programmes specifically focusing children of Arundhatiyar manual scavengers.

The key findings are as follows:

- 24% children dropped out from school; 3/4th were boys and 1/4th were girls.
- 28 children (upto 18 years of age) from 200 Arundhatiyar families were working.
 - 7 worked in agricultural farms; 12 worked in construction sites, factories and sales jobs.

- There was a high rate of indebtedness of all Arundhatiyar manual scavengers- ranging from below Indian rupees-10,000 to above 60,000. In the villages, large number of families had a debt of Indian rupees- 20,000; In municipalities- Indian rupees 30,000.
- Most loans were taken for the following three categories: medical, construction of homes and education.
- Irony of the situation was that none of the Arunthathiyar families covered under the study in the villages had toilets at home. Only less than half of the families had toilets in municipality or corporations.

Key Recommendations arising out of the study:

Legal and Social Awareness:

- Legal and Social awareness to all government departments specifically focusing on children's issues towards protection against discrimination and violence as a result of their parents working as manual scavengers.
- Effective implementation of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993.
- Establish Legal advisory forum consisting of Arunthathiyars constituted at District level to bring to the notice of the Government issues relating to violence against Arunthathiyar children- child labour or discrimination and caste based violence as a result of the parents occupation as manual scavengers
- Increase the Arunthathiyar reservation from 3% to 6% for employment, education.
- Increased awareness on government welfare programmes, schemes for Arunthathiyar children.

Education:

- Special residential schools for Arunthaiyar children - under the Adi Dravadiar welfare department.
- Scholarships for Arunthaiyar children with a special focus on drop-out children for primary and higher education.
- Arunthaiyar girl children, students are mobilized at a forum to create awareness and lobby the government against the sexual harassment, violence and discrimination-in and out of schools faced by Arunthaiyar children as a result of their parent's occupation as manual scavengers.

Community driven initiatives:

- Design, plan, develop and implement community based model of care and protection for Arunthaiyar children in collaboration with key stakeholders in the district.
- Organizing and reviving District and State level Arunthaiyar Panchayat Presidents' Association; creating awareness in schools and community against violence against Arunthaiyar children; action oriented training to eliminate child labour and school violence and discrimination.
- SHGs should be formed by organizing Arunthaiyar students' Parents and create linkages with financial institutions to avoid obstacles over accessing subsidised loans.
- A sharing meeting for Arunthaiyar students and parents conducted at Block level at least once a month to review issues related to violence against Arunthaiyars and disseminate information about Govt provisions and various welfare schemes of scheduled castes

- Village level task force group initiated to specifically monitor development of Arunthatiyar children registered with the Anganwadis and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan centers at least once a month.
- Campaign and awareness programmes to address the psychological and sexual harassment of Arunthatiyar children.
- Explore opportunities for higher education or vocational courses for Arunthatiyar children and same to be conducted in collaboration with organisations in all Arunthatiyar dominated areas.
- Design and employ Community Driven Development (CDD) approach in collaboration with the Panchayats.

A study to understand the occupational impact on the children of manual scavengers from Arunthatiyar community in Coimbatore, Erode, Ramanathapuram and Salem Districts-Tamil Nadu

Chapter – 1

Introduction

Child Development

Psychologists assert that the mind of a new born child is like a plain slate and the character of a grown up man depends on what has been written on it. They also challenge that a new born child can become a specific kind of person, whoever is intended to by the parents, for example a doctor, a lawyer, a scientist, a leader or a criminal. These ideas indicate the significance of the physical environment in which a child grows.

After the birth, as the child grows, it undergoes several stages of development. When this happens, it acquires several characteristics as a result of its interaction with its immediate environment including significant people like parents, other members of the family etc., in order to fulfill its basic needs. These results of interaction are stored in the mind of the child as experiences.

Some of these experiences are negative as they yield only unpleasant results but at the same time, there are positive experiences as they yield pleasant results which tend to recur and the unpleasant ones tend to be suppressed in the corner of the mind but remain actively prevent its recurrence to avoid unpleasantness.

A school going child who grows in a 'normal' family environment gains self confidence, develops social interaction skills and decision-making skills and the child

grows to be 'normal'-socially acceptable-successful grown-up. But at the same time, when the environment of the family and school are adverse, the child becomes a drop-out, the possibility for developing the desirable skills and characters for a successful social life is reduced to a minimum and instead, the condition to develop undesirable characteristics starts developing.

Social Status of Sanitary workers

Sanitation includes management of liquid and solid waste, personal, domestic and environmental hygiene. As human settlements grew and the cities expanded, the sanitation problem increased. In the early part of the 20th century and even today, open defecation is practiced in both rural and urban India. In urban areas open ditches, pit latrines and bucket system were used. The dehumanizing practice of removal of night soil by human hands was also prevalent. The antiquated sanitation system (bucket latrine) in India used manual scavengers drawn from the downtrodden communities to carry the buckets, which undermined their social position in society and health.

Manual scavengers- Prevalence

Manual scavenging is a practice by which Dalits remove excreta from public and private dry pit latrines and carry them to dumping grounds and disposal sites. Though long outlawed, the practice of manual scavenging continues in most states, and will continue as long as dry latrines are used. In 2002-03 the Union Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment admitted the existence of 6.76 lakh (676,000) manual scavengers in India and the presence of 92 lakh (9,200,000) dry latrines, spread across 21 States and Union Territories. According to



unofficial estimates, the number of manual scavengers in India may be as high as 1.3 million. Manual scavengers are employed by private and public employers, including the military engineering services, the army, the railways, and other organs of the state.

Manual scavengers are routinely exposed to both human and animal waste without the protection of masks, uniforms, gloves, shoes, appropriate buckets, and mops. This has severe repercussions for their health; February 12th, 2007, Centre for Human Rights- Global Justice, New York “Summary of the critical issue pertaining to India, periodical report to the committee on the elimination of the racial discrimination - the majority of scavengers suffer from anemia, diarrhea, and vomiting, with 62 percent suffering respiratory diseases, 32 percent suffering skin diseases, 42 percent suffering jaundice, and 23 percent suffering trachoma, leading to blindness. Many scavengers have also died of carbon monoxide poisoning while cleaning septic tanks. According to Government of India statistics, an estimated one million Dalits are manual scavengers (a majority of them women) who clear night soil from public and private latrines and dispose of dead animals; unofficial estimates are much higher. Manual scavenging is a caste-based occupation, deemed too polluting and filthy for anyone but Dalits. Manual scavengers exist under different caste names throughout the country, such as the Bhangis in Gujarat, the Pakhis in Andhra Pradesh, and the Arunthathiyars in Tamilnadu. (“Arunthathiyars” means the caste, Arunthathiyars, Chakkiliyan, Madari, Madiga, Pagadai, Thoti and Adi Andhra)

Even after 60 years since Independence, several committees have called for the abolition of the practice of disposing of human night soil waste by having it carried



away in head loads by safai karamcharis (cleaning workers). In 1993, the Centre outlawed the practice and the construction of dry

latrines and drew up a scheme for the rehabilitation of night soil gatherers or manual scavengers, as they are still referred to in official proceedings. Yet there are even today an estimated 50 thousand Dec 13th – Manushi journal initiation against manual scavenging Manual scavenger are working in the government departments in Tamilnadu, most of them are belong to Arunthathiyars community, who work and live in conditions that are, apart from being extremely degrading, a serious risk to their health.

Arunthathiyar Community:

Arunthathiyar is a Community which is the lowest in the caste and social ladder. Their socio-economic condition is pathetic because of this they have to move heaven and earth to make money for meeting their daily needs. This sometimes compels them to send their children to work as coolies (daily wage labourers) to different industries. This apart, these people fully rely upon certain local money lenders for getting money for which they in turn pay back more not only in terms of money and also in terms of laborious work.

Arunthathiyar Community has historically and traditionally been engaged in activities servicing the dominant class. The servicing also being activities that the upper caste Hindus would consider the most menial. These activities include disposal of dead (both animal and human which include burial/ cremation), sanitation and scavenging, footwear and leather related tasks which include de-skinning, processing and conversion to final product. Some of the other tasks also include being messengers for conveying deaths and drum-beating and playing the band in death processions. In urban areas today these communities are exclusively involved in manual scavenging of human waste/ septic tank cleaning and this has become an occupational exclusivity even in the officialdom.

Arunthaiyars are a particular caste group found in Tamilnadu, where the manifestation of their social exclusion is very similar. Their main occupation is manual scavenging, their status as 'untouchables' puts them at the heart of an insidious form of discrimination and social unacceptability. In Tamilnadu, Arunthaiyar children remain disadvantaged across many social indicators. Even though in Tamil Nadu, there has been a significant increase in overall literacy rates and school participation rates and resultantly the gender and social disparities are declining, the overall caste based disparities still exist. Reasons for the exclusion of Arunthaiyars include inadequate education facilities, poor teaching methods and discriminatory attitude towards Arunthaiyar children by teachers and children of other caste groups. Limited and inequitable distribution of state budget affects the poor more and their exclusion from savings and credit and welfare schemes has further increased their poverty. Government of India have anti-discriminatory laws but the major problem has been the effective enforcement of those laws.

Untouchability:

In order to address the situation of manual scavenging, it is important to understand the phenomenon of 'untouchability'. The Hindu version of untouchability has a racial basis, which is based on the premise that one becomes impure based on birth and religion. They are nine categories of caste based discrimination is practice they are: i) denial of entry into houses, restaurants, temples; ii) inability to perform important religious service because wearing a sacred thread(which gives the religious sanction to a person to perform religious ceremonies) is not permitted, etc.; iii) access to common resources such as using water from taps or ponds used by upper caste is denied; iv) denial of participation in public activities or entry into public places such as religious functions, government functions; v) forced labour or discriminatory practices of labour; vi) dominant and exploitative behavior towards Arunthaiyars such as practice of obeisance; vii) atrocities such as rape/sexual assault against Arunthaiyars women; viii) social boycott – if a 'high caste Hindu' member marries

an Arunthiyar of either gender, he/ she is banned from the society; ix) Attitudinal untouchability.

Violation of Fundamental Rights

Manual scavenging is a violation of the fundamental rights assured by Article 14 (equality before law), Article 17 (abolition of untouchability) and Article 23 (right against exploitation). The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrine (Prohibition) Act was passed in 1993. It stipulates imprisonment up to a year and fines up to Rs.2, 000 or both.

Denial of Right to Education

Right to education for Dalits has been the basic denial in the traditional caste system, over the centuries. Tamilnadu, in spite of its great strides in general literacy is yet to solve the basic problem of the Dalits' right to education. Tamilnadu has, off late, been recognized for having achieved near total enrolment of all children of school going age. It has been hailed as holding the 2nd rank in the whole of the country in terms of enrolment at the primary level.

While this can lead to legitimate pride, a serious look at the enrolment of Dalit children, even at the primary level is the need of the hour. A recent sample survey, undertaken in the districts of Virudhunagar and Tuticorin, has raised the clear possibility of manipulation of figures, by headmasters and school teachers, even in terms of enrolment at the primary level. It was noted that, even though names were found in the attendance register, the corresponding students did not attend school. It is a clear instance where Government data need to be corroborated by actual grassroots data. In fact more than the problem of enrolment, the issue of children dropping out of school, at various levels, is assuming a serious proportion. Poor enrolment rates at Middle and High School level-about 39-40%- clearly show that almost 50% of those who qualify for a particular stage, drop-out before completing that stage.

**Educational levels attained by major Scheduled Castes in Tamilnadu
(As percentage of the total population)**

Caste	Illiterate	Primary	Middle	High and Hr Sec level	Technical	College
All SCs	29	31.9	18.4	17.4	0.6	2.7
Pallar	30.2	31.9	17.7	16.5	0.7	3
Paraiyar	30.5	31.3	18	16.8	0.6	2.8
Arunthathiyars	35.2	34	16.1	13.5	0.5	0.7

Source: Office of the Registrar General India, Census of India 2001.

Communist Party of India-Marxist has conducted survey at Tamilnadu to find out the real nature of this activity and the social conditions of the communities engaged in this work. The findings of the survey revealed that the social conditions of the manual scavenging Arunthathiyars community were the worst amongst the entire Dalit population. Since both the husband and wife were engaged in the same type of work to support the family and had to go for work early in the morning, they were not able to send their children to school and hence most of the children were with zero-literacy rate or primary school dropouts. Only about 30 per cent of the children went to High School and most of them dropped out to get engaged-to-be-married or support their parents in scavenging work. Even if one per cent of them could complete a degree or diploma course, they could not compete with others for jobs and were forced to do scavenging work.

Eradication of manual Scavenging and Improvement in Education

A major step towards improving the education of the children of manual scavengers would be its total eradication across the Nation. Manual scavenging is based on caste and a stigma is attached to the persons who belong to this caste-in this case the Arunthathiyars. The dependents of the caste based manual scavengers especially their

children suffer much from the stigmatized occupation. It paves way to the discrimination of these Children at public places particularly in schools though not obviously seen conspicuously; it is mostly expressed in a disguised manner. Children attend schools for the development of their future but are shunned because of the discriminatory practices towards them.

Here, in this section is a look at the chronology of the steps taken by the Government- which mostly have failed-to curb this menace legally.

Legal support

The first Sanitation bill in India was introduced in 1878 which made the construction of toilets compulsory and also proposed the construction of public toilets. Mahatma Gandhi laid the foundation for a rural sanitation movement by establishing the '*Harijan Sevak Sangh*' for the liberation of scavengers. Subsequently, on October 15-1947, a private member bill was moved in Greater Bombay to abolish the practice of manual scavenging. This was followed by the setting up of several commissions and debates in Parliament.

Ban on Manual Scavenging

The Indian Government had brought one legislation that would ensure abolishment of manual scavenging- The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. This Act has been in force for more than a decade but sadly has been ineffective because of the deeply rooted caste system and caste based discrimination.

An Act With twin strategies

The 2004-2005 National Human Rights Report- 2004-05-held that the Planning Commission had planned a nationwide eradication of manual scavenging by 2007 under the Nation Action Plan for total Eradication of Manual Scavenging. But the

reality is that even after the after the three years of the planned action, a legal battle is still being fought in the Supreme Court.

Government Interventions:

Special care by the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu (presently Dr. M.Karunanithi) towards:

- Construction of *Samathuvapuram*-which means a colony where all caste people live together without any discriminatory practices.
- *Samathuva Mayanam*-common burial ground for all caste people
- Personal contribution of 62 lakhs for the benefit of higher education expenses for the Arunthathiyars students.
- *Samachir kalvi thittam*, which means equitable education i.e. a system which adapts a common syllabus for both Tamil and English and other media of instruction and different types of school education like CBSE, Matriculation and state board.
- Special order to purchase of latest equipments for cleaning underground drainage in ten corporations in Tamilnadu.

Third Five Year Plan for Rehabilitation & Resettlement of Scavengers

In 1956, Government of India constituted a Central Advisory Board for *Harijan* Welfare. The Board reviewed the working and living conditions of manual scavengers in the country and recommended introducing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for liberation and rehabilitation of scavengers. However, this scheme failed and was discontinued during the Fifth Five Year Plan following the realization that the practice of manual scavenging was inextricably linked to the evils of a stratified social structure.

Strengthening Rural & Urban Water Supply and Sanitation (Sixth Five Year Plan)

Since the beginning of the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) and the launch of the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade in 1980, India has been strengthening its efforts towards rural and urban water supply and sanitation. During the decade-1980-90- it aimed to cover 80% of the urban population through proper sanitation facilities and eradicate manual scavenging.

Reliance on Subsidy (Seventh Five Year Plan)

During the Seventh Five Year Plan (1988-92), a new programme on sanitation was introduced at the village level for health centers, schools and *anganwadis*. Individual household latrines were also constructed under this programme. The factors which came in the way of implementation of the programme were given low priority by the State Governments and the people in general. Low emphasis on information, education and communication (IEC material), promotion of a single model-twin pit pours flush latrines; heavy reliance on subsidy and lack of motivation efforts were some of the factors which should have been taken into consideration. It was soon realized that investment and subsidies alone would not ensure improved coverage of sanitation.

Discontinuation of Subsidies and Inclusion of User's Responsibility (Eight Five Year Plan)

Safe drinking water supply and basic sanitation formed vital component of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). Subsidies were discontinued except for the households living below poverty line (BPL). The new dimension in this plan was to include user responsibility for the operation and maintenance of facilities, and allowing local bodies to charge for sanitation services. Though the Eighth Five Year Plan's target was to cover 5% rural population with sanitation facilities, the progress was hardly 4% of the target in 1996.

Eradication of Manual Scavenging (Ninth Five Year Plan)

The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) emphasized the need for undertaking all possible measures for rapid expansion and improvement of sanitation facilities in urban and rural areas. At that time, it was estimated that 20% of the households would be provided with sanitary facilities through Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) that was entrusted to the Ministry of Rural Development, way back in 1986. The programme guidelines were revised in March 1991 and again in March 1993. The guidelines included the amendment of an appropriate mix of Central and State investment, institutional finance, strengthening of operation and maintenance and more importantly, the involvement of communities at various stages of programme implementation. The main objective of the scheme was to eradicate manual scavenging by converting all existing dry latrines in rural areas into low cost sanitary latrines.

Total Eradication of Manual Scavenging (Tenth Five Year Plan)

The Tenth Five Year Plan also envisaged taking all possible measures for rapid expansion and improvement of sanitation facilities in urban areas with local participation. The issue was accorded immense importance by the Prime Minister Mr. Manmohan Singh also in his Independence Day speech on 15 August, 2002. He announced that the Government would amalgamate all the different schemes presently being run by Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Urban Development for speeding up the liberation and rehabilitation of manual scavengers.

Tamilnadu Scavenger Welfare Board

To improve the socio-economic and educational development of scavengers, this Board was established on 11.06.2007 under the Chairpersonship of Minister for *Adi Dravidar* Welfare. Till 31.05.2009, 31587 members have been enrolled and 913 persons have benefited till 31.03.2009.

Special Reservation for Arunthathiyar

Among the *Adi-Dravidars*, Arunthathiyars are still at the lowest rung in terms of their socio-economic-political and educational status. The Tamilnadu Arunthathiyars (Special Reservation of seats in Educational Institutions including Private Educational Institutions and of appointments or posts in the Services under the State within the Reservation for the Scheduled Castes) Act 2009 (Tamil Nadu Act 4 of 2009) has been enacted and 3% reservation to Arunthathiyars within the 18% reservation is available to the *Adi Dravidars*. It came into force from 29.04.2009.

Present status:

Tamilnadu (TN) is one of the states adopted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 early. It approved the Act in 1995, but started implementation only in 2001. Yet there has been no improvement. Each year the state allocates some amount towards rehabilitation. Today the state of the Arunthathiyars working as manual scavengers in TN is that they continue to work as manual scavengers. Their work is visible and accepted yet nothing has been done till date.

The Andhra Pradesh based *Safai Karamchari Andolan*, which works among the manual scavengers, stated in its report released in 2005 that 13, 00,000 Dalits were working as manual scavengers across the country. However, the Union Ministry for Social Justice and Empowerment has put the figures as 30, 42,000 who are to be rehabilitated under the Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS). The Scheme launched in January 2007 is being implemented in 16 states.

Admitting the prevalence of manual scavenging, *Mukul Wasnik*, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, said in the Rajya Sabha in 2009 that the Centre has

set March 2010 as the revise deadline. As many as 1.15 lakh manual scavengers have been identified by the Ministry for the rehabilitation programmes. Mr. D Napoleon, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, said in a written reply to a query in the Lok Sabha that Tamilnadu has 11,896 manual scavengers who are engaged in the removal of human excreta. They are the intended beneficiaries of the rehabilitation scheme. (*The New Indian Express-M Rafi Ahmed ENS-Coimbatore, July 27-2009*).

The reader must kindly note the discrepancies in the statistics provided by the government bodies and that of the voluntary organizations run by the parties affected by the menace in one instance Tamilnadu government has denied the existence of manual scavenging in the state in the year 2007 and it assures that it has been completely eradicated from the state but in the above statement the Central Minister Mr. D. Napoleon has admitted is existence. The government hides the fact of the existence of manual scavenging by distinguishing manual scavengers from sanitary workers. The name manual scavenger no longer exists in the muster rolls and no worker is called manual scavenger any more. But as has been noted above, the sanitary worker does include manual scavenging.



So, it will be a better choice for the Central Government to promulgate ordnance banning the manual scavenging and relieve all manual scavengers in employment immediately with all benefits of voluntary retirement and to these who want alternate jobs must be given opportunities for training related to their jobs / all assistance for self employment and entrepreneurship.

School Environment- Psychologically a Push Factor

An enormous stress is created in the minds of tender, impressionable children through a rejection of their needs and constant reinforcement of the idea that they are not equal to their fellow students. This stress has a near-permanent adverse impact on the growth of their creativity. This problem's analysis points out that while certain universal measures are useful and necessary for enabling Arunthathiyars children to enroll and complete primary education, they are by no means sufficient. Arunthathiyars are not only disadvantaged by poverty, but also by social exclusion from civil and political processes and other forms of social interaction. It is therefore helpful to place this group very firmly in a social exclusion framework in order to articulate their very special needs and to develop policies to meet them.



Total Change of Teachers' Attitude a Must

Education in the above context in the case of children of Manual Scavengers refers to the creation of an institutional mechanism that fosters an environment in which their self-esteem can flourish and their creativity can blossom. It also means exposing them to the values of self-respect, equality and freedom; not overloading them with expectations of the non-Dalit version of what is considered "good", which propagates the supremacy of the non-Dalit psyche; and above all it means creating an environment in which there is no rejection of either their needs or their personality. This kind of education presupposes both a kind of a teacher and a kind of pedagogy. The teacher here is more of a friend and philosopher, and not a taskmaster. It is very important not to convey to the children that there is some problem with them that needs correction. The teacher should be able to advocate and develop reverence in the minds of children towards the basic values that are at the core of the Dalit identity. It

also needs to be kept in mind that when these children walk into school, they already do carry along with them the baggage of the caste system from their social environment. This baggage needs to be unbundled with proper understanding.

Only Retention and No Detention

Another burden that children carry along with them is the stress of examination-fear of failure-the actual failure makes several students drop out of school. Every failure that a child meets with reduces his self confidence in life. Failure in the examination will have the same effect in a child at a very young age. The Government of India has come to the rescue of the children, by introducing a bill in the Parliament on “Free and compulsory education rights bill 2008” which has come into force in 2009. According to this Act there is a ban which has been imposed on the public or private schools to declare a student as ‘fail’ in the examination up to 8th standard in order to implement universalisation of elementary education. This Act bans a student repeating the standard already he has undergone.

The age of being declared-‘fail’-in the elementary education is now banished. “Instead of considering the poor students as if they failed in the examination” extra care should be given to the students who perform poor in studies”-Mr. Govinda-Member of the Committee- which drafted the Act-mentioned in an interview. Daily monitoring and assessments methods should be created and annual examinations should be avoided. The pattern that creates stress in the minds of the students is not considered to be a better system. They should learn in a stress free environment. As far as children of manual scavengers are concerned, they have to continue attending the school without break. No detention system will favor them to brand them ‘Unfit’ for study. It is a welcome change in the Indian Educational System. However the gap in the present Act is that the act does not specifically look at the issues concerning the guarantee of education for the most marginalized children in this case the children of

the Arunthaiyar community working as manual scavengers. It also only looks at the age group of 6-14-exclusign 0-6 or above 14 years.

Concluding statement

Thus, by any means, the life of the children of these innocent and suppressed Arunthaiyar people has to be safeguarded from the discriminatory caste practices. The unimpressioned minds of the children must only be filled with high aspirations, hopes, motivations, self-esteem and lively spirit for leading quality life in order to become true citizens-with equal rights and entitlements in the country.



Chapter 2

Statement of the Problem

“For in India a man is not scavenger because of his work. He is a scavenger because of his birth, irrespective of the question whether he does scavenging or not”.

- **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**

I. Statement of the Problem

The Condition of Scavenger community in Tamil Nadu is a matter of grave concern for all the right thinking person world over. It is regrettably noted that the official attitude of the government has not changed towards these communities. Scavenger community has all along been living in the rural and urban areas serving the middle classes, upper elites, feudal lords, yet none of them ever bothered or cared for those who clean their shit, enter deep into the sewage pit to continue the sewage line.

The condition of manual scavenging community is miserable. Since most of the people from the community are uneducated. Social evils are prevalent in the community. Poverty gives birth to different things including alcoholism, wife beating, gambling. Most of the children cannot go to school. Their children become part of the profession. These shocking details hurt and put the country to shame and pronounce loudly that the children are not safe and cannot go to school.

Manvel Scavenging work is rampant. Most scavengers live in segregated rural colonies and are unable to make use of common resources. Scavenger families and their children were denied entry into hair-cutting saloons in many villages. They could not use community halls for functions and not even decorate their homes during

domestic ceremonies. They are silently suffer untouchability in its myriad forms - for instance, denial of access to common service like water sources, public roads and temples, shops and schools.

Government agencies are given insignificant amounts of remuneration in manual scavenging so it comes as a huge surprise that many families still borrow money from their upper-caste land owners and consequently send their children into bondage. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 abolished all agreements and obligations arising out of the bonded labour system. Even though still many manual scavengers children work as bonded labour / child labour.

While the 83rd Constitutional Amendment recognizes education as a fundamental right for all Indian citizens, disparities continue to exist between the various castes. Indian constitutional promises of universal primary education still many manual scavengers' children do not enter the school. The poor quality of education is reflected in the continuing low level of completion rates of primary school. Gender and social disparities have also declined with an overall increase in school attendance.

In Tamilnadu, students, teachers and parents all acknowledge that beating and humiliating children in the name of discipline is very common in schools. The more 'disadvantaged' students tend to suffer more and teachers are reported to use punishment against selected children for submission. Students who are younger, from poor or lower caste groups are most likely to be the targets. Verbal abuse against manual scavenger's children by calling them derogatory names is reported in Tamilnadu.

70% of the people do not have balance diet. Most of the Children are malnutrition and anemic. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS) II data, the neo natal mortality, infant mortality and child mortality and less than five mortality is higher for manual scavengers families at all India level as compared with total

mortality for others. At national level anemia among manual scavengers' children is more than that prevalent among others.

Specific Problems and Major Issues faced by manual scavengers' children

From the survey of literature available, the following major issues have been identified which is affecting to growth and development of the Manual Scavengers children.

1. Marginalization & Social Exclusion
2. Lack of awareness about their rights and responsibilities as a citizen as assured by the constitution of India
3. Lack of education resulting in a negative mentality that makes the manual scavengers feel that they are fit only for sweeping and scavenging
4. Lack of basic amenities-both inside and outside the house
5. Occupation based health related problems
6. Lack of will to improve their own environment / atmosphere.
7. Because of the poor economic status of parents, they do not care for their children's development

Therefore, the study specifically tries to understand to what extent the working and living conditions of manual scavengers work is affect their Children life style.

Objectives of the Present Study

1. To explore the educational problems of the children of Arunthatiyar manual scavengers in terms of poor enrollment, drop out, pass-out, poor learning achievement; learning problems and ultimately tries to understand the existing bottlenecks on the road of higher education being faced by these children.
2. To unearth the types and quantum of discrimination-social, culture, economic, education; schemes relating to women and children and other Government

Schemes, etc; and assess the discrimination against the manual scavengers' children in various settings-like school, temple, community, peer groups, government etc.

3. To assess how poverty and debt affected the Arunthathiyar children's education, entry into child labour / bonded labour etc.
4. To understand the consequences and after effect of the social exclusion of the children of Arunthathiyar community working as manual scavengers.
5. To assess the impact of rehabilitation measures undertaken by the Government & NGOs for the Arunthathiyar community and children's lives-quality education, prevent child labour and health and nutrition.
6. To suggest alternative course of action / improvements to the existing system of rehabilitation and empowerment action programmes specifically focusing children of Arunthathiyar manual scavengers.

Methodology

a. Geographical focus on sample

District	Sample size	Criteria of sample selection
Erode	50	<p>A. Incidence of Arunthathiyars engaged in Manual Scavenging in this district</p> <p>B. 200 Arunthathiyar families working as Manual Scavengers selected for the purpose of the study. 50 families from 4 districts chosen for the present study.</p>
Coimbatore	50	
Salem	50	
Ramanad	50	

Four major districts in Tamilnadu where the concentration of Manual Scavengers Children is still very high, namely Erode, Coimbatore, Salem and Ramanathapuram districts are selected for the study.

b. The Universe

The families of the manual scavenger's children form the universe for the study.

c. Sampling Procedure

Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling will be adopted for the current study to have a literally more acceptable representation. 300 odd scavenger children will be selected for the present study. However, the proportionate sampling procedure will be adopted to decide appropriate size of sampling. While deciding the sampling size, rural / urban, educated / illiterate, male / female, employed/ unemployed, etc., will be considered as criterion to draw samples. Both the workers and their wards will be interviewed for the study.

d. Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary sources of data will be collected from children as well as documents, manuscripts, research papers, journals, news papers, etc.

e. Data Collection

Appropriate number of enumerators will be employed to collect primary and secondary data from different sources. Both male and female enumerators / field workers will be engaged. The target groups will be contacted at evenings or during their leisure time so as to set right mentality to provide data.

f. Report Writing & Documentation.**g. Social Relevance**

If this study is undertaken we can understand the ground reality of this serious issue, thereby certain strategic planning could be devised for eradicating the problems of Manual scavengers' children and their root causes with a suitable

remedial and corrective measures to ascertain social and economic betterment of children. On the basis of the study we carry out the advocacy and lobbying activities at Tamil Nadu.

Chapter 3

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

I- QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The present study has revealed several findings about the plight the school-going children of manual scavengers who belong to Arunthathiyars community in a geographical area covered under the study-namely four districts of Tamilnadu State: Erode, Salem, Ramanathapuram and Coimbatore. Arunthathiyar community is an out-caste group in the Indian social hierarchy. They were considered untouchables and kept socially excluded only with the purpose of utilizing them to carry out such tasks as those which are of disgusting nature and had possibilities of contracting diseases of communicable nature. Historically, the community was carefully kept away from mingling with other communities in main stream social life; even today they are kept outside the main residential areas; they are prevented from getting education and acquiring any special skill useful for the economic development. It is indirectly a forced social situation in which their survival will become impossible if they are denied any rights and entitlements and social norms-conforming to the set rules of the society- are followed which prevents the access to the basic rights of survival.

When Arunthathiyars were living in this secluded condition, historical events contributed to the pathetic condition of their lives. When Europeans came to India, they also brought their life styles to the Indian soil. They introduced lavatories for the first time in their residential places in India. These lavatories were needed to be kept clean every day for which they required manual assistance. Arunthathiyars, who were always vulnerable to this sort of work, fell prey to this victimisation. This is how, the poor uneducated traditional group, was entrapped in the menace.

Sampling distribution

Here, in this chapter-the empirically examination of the present conditions of the children of manual scavengers and their family background is presented so as to determine the probable causes for their conditions. Firstly, the sample distribution by different variables is presented:

Table No. 1 shows the District wise distribution of manual scavengers by no. of children in each location.

District	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Erode	7 (19)	22 (26)	15 (31)	6 (21)	50 (25)
Salem	4 (11)	29 (34)	10 (21)	7 (24)	50 (25)
Ramanathapuram	17 (46)	21 (24)	12 (25)	0	50 (25)
Coimbatore	9 (24)	14 (16)	11 (23)	16 (55)	50 (25)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 1 show that children are equally distributed among the districts under study and also distributed in four locations namely village panchayats, Town Panchayats municipality and Municipal Corporation. There is no municipal corporation in Ramanathapuram District. 200 children i.e. 50 in each district.

Table No. 2 shows the no. of places covered in locality.

District	No of Village Panchayats	No of Town Panchayats	No of Municipalities	No of Corporations	Total
Erode	7	8	7	1	23
Salem	4	10	3	1	18
Ramanathapuram	16	5	4	0	25
Coimbatore	4	8	2	2	16
Total	31	31	16	4	82

Table No.3 shows the sex wise distribution manual scavengers by children in each location.

District	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Male	37 (100)	75 (87)	29 (60)	21 (72)	162 (81)
Female	0	11 (13)	19 (40)	8 (28)	38 (19)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

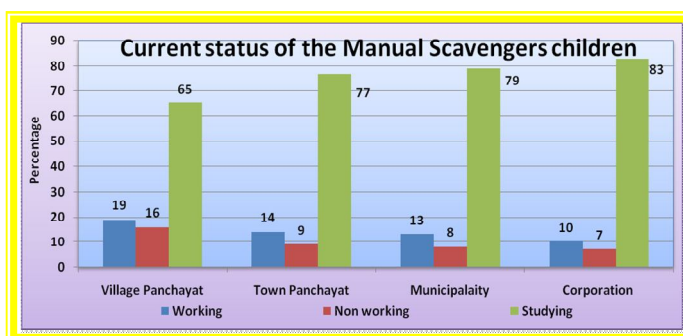
Table 3 shows that there are no female children in the village Panchayats and there are more female scavengers in the Municipalities.

School going Children

Table no. 4 shows the status of the children of manual scavengers by location.

Status	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Working	7 (19)	12 (14)	6 (13)	3 (10)	28 (14)
Non working	6 (16)	8 (9)	4 (8)	2 (7)	20 (10)
Studying	24 (65)	66 (77)	38 (79)	24 (83)	152 (76)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 4 portrays the current status of the children of manual scavengers in four different locations. 76% of the total children are at present, attending school in different classes. The remaining 24% of the children are out of school. i.e. they dropped out at



some stage in their school education. Among the drop outs 14% of them are working in various places like agricultural farms, shops and domestic work and 10% of them are neither working nor continuing their skill developing activities.

Further inspection of the table reveals that percentage of school going children at corporation's areas is more than that of the other locations. It gradually decreases as they move on to rural locations and vice-versa is true for the percentage of drop outs. It can be inferred that the power of pushing factors in the school environment in urban locations is relatively less than that of the other locations which means that there is a more favorable situation prevailing in the schools to continue the education. It can also be inferred that the power of pull factors acting outside the school is also less in the urban locations than that in the other locations. It is also found that more dropped out children are working. The implication is the economic condition of the family. The children are pushed to a position to support their parents financially to run the family. In the table the percentage of working children is found to be higher in the rural location and it decreases as we move on to urban locations. This means the need for financial support from the children to family is relatively less in the urban locations because the income of the parents in those locations is relatively higher and consistent (monthly or weekly) than that in the other locations. So it can be concluded that parental income has its role to play in the development of the children.

It appears that the non-working children are considered the real problem to the family and to the society as a whole. This category needs to be monitored carefully and steps to be taken to rehabilitate them in a proper way. In the table, the percentage of such children is higher in village panchayats and decreases as we move on to urban locations which means villages need more assistance from authorities concerned to carry out the corrective measures.

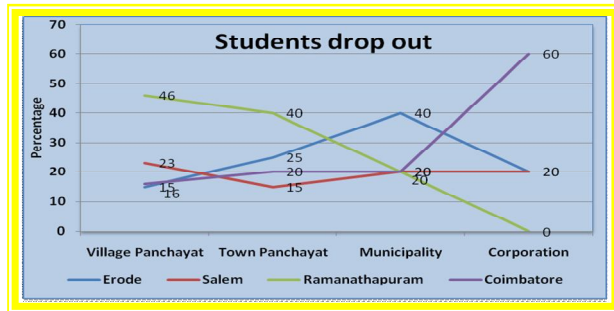
Distribution of dropout Children

Table no. 5 shows the distribution of drop out children of manual scavengers in the study area by location.

District	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Erode	2 (15)	5 (25)	4 (40)	1 (20)	12 (25)
Salem	3 (23)	3 (15)	2 (20)	1 (20)	9 (19)

Ramanathapuram	6 (46)	8 (40)	2 (20)	0	16 (33)
Coimbatore	2 (16)	4 (20)	2 (20)	3 (60)	11 (23)
Total	13 (100)	20 (100)	10 (100)	5 (100)	48 (100)

The data plotted in the table 5 shows the distribution of the drop out children in all four locations namely village panchayats, town panchayats, municipal towns and municipal corporations. The rate of drop out is higher in the town panchayats



followed by village panchayats municipalities and corporations. This can be justified by attributing it to the favorable school environment and better economic background of the family. But when we go deeper into the data we find that the most sophisticated and a hi-tech city of Coimbatore corporation area has scored the highest rate of drop out of all the categories. On the contrary, the most background and rural village panchayat of Ramanathapuram district has scored second to Coimbatore Corporation. These high rates of drop out are significant and the reasons behind these contortions at the extremities can be justified by analyzing the tables coming later in this chapter.

Table 6 shows the sex wise distribution of drop out children by location.

Sex of drop out	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Male	7 (54)	17 (85)	6 (60)	3 (60)	33 (61)
Female	6 (46)	3 (15)	4 (40)	2 (40)	15 (29)
Total	13 (100)	20 (100)	10 (100)	5 (100)	48 (100)

Table 6 shows that nearly three fourth of the dropped out children are males and the remaining one fourth are females. If we consider municipal towns and corporations as urban areas, then, the rate of sex wise dropout in some in the urban areas. If we consider village panchayats and town panchayats as rural areas, then the rate of sex wise dropout very much differs in these rural areas. In village panchayats the proportion of rate of male - female dropout is almost equal. But there is a vast difference found in town panchayats.

Table 7 shows the age wise distribution of dropout by location

Age	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
8	1 (8)	0	0	0	1 (2)
9	1 (8)	1 (5)	0	0	2 (4)
10	4 (30)	2 (10)	0	0	6 (12)
11	3 (24)	3 (15)	1 (10)	0	7 (15)
12	2 (15)	4 (20)	1 (10)	1 (20)	8 (17)
13	2 (15)	5 (25)	2 (20)	1 (20)	10 (21)
14	0	4 (20)	4 (40)	1 (20)	9 (19)
15	0	1 (5)	2 (20)	2 (40)	5 (10)
Total	13 (100)	20 (100)	10 (100)	5 (100)	48 (100)

Table 7 portrays the age wise distribution of dropped out children by location. On further examination of this data, we could draw find a few interesting inferences. In village panchayats dropout starts right from the age of eight years and all children drop out at the age of thirteen. Tenth year seems to be a critical age for the children of village panchayats. The drop out starts in the town panchayats at the age of nine i.e. one year later than that of is village panchayats and it extends up to the fifteenth year of children. Maximum dropout occurs in this location at the age of thirteen years. Careful observation reveals that in municipal towns, drop out starts in the year of eleven and it goes up to fifteenth year of the children and most of the dropouts occur in the age of fourteen years. But in the corporation cities dropout starts at the age of twelve years and it extends to fifteen years-maximum dropout occurs in the

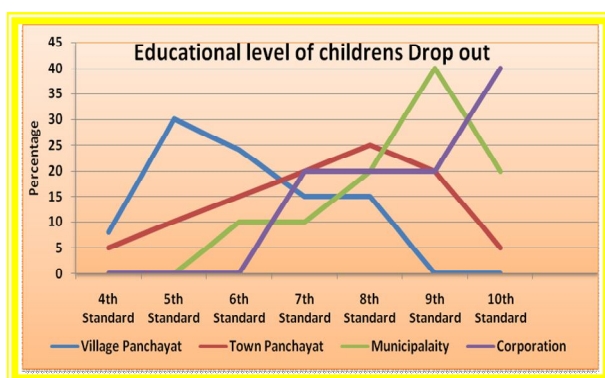
corporations at the age of fifteen years. When we put all locations together and see the age, thirteenth year seems to be very critical for the children of all locations-as maximum dropout occurs in this age.

Before any conclusions are drawn from this data, an inspection of the following table becomes important as it gives information on the standards at which they dropout corresponding to their age.

Table no.8 shows the standards at which the children dropout by location.

Standard	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
3rd Standard	1 (8)	0	0	0	1 (2)
4th Standard	1 (8)	1 (5)	0	0	2 (4)
5th Standard	4 (30)	2 (10)	0	0	6 (12)
6th Standard	3 (24)	3 (15)	1 (10)	0	7 (15)
7th Standard	2 (15)	4 (20)	1 (10)	1 (20)	8 (17)
8th Standard	2 (15)	5 (25)	2 (20)	1 (20)	10 (21)
9th Standard	0	4 (20)	4 (40)	1 (20)	9 (19)
10th Standard	0	1 (5)	2 (20)	2 (40)	5 (10)
Total	13 (100)	20 (100)	10 (100)	5 (100)	48 (100)

Same type of data has been obtained in the table 8 as that of the previous one. In order to have an idea whether there is a match between age and the standard they



study at which dropout occurs, it was found-in village panchayats and town panchayats dropout occurs in the early stages of education where universalisation of primary education is still a distant dream. It may be attributed to the difficulty for the children in coping

with the school system. The difficulty level increases as he goes up in the education

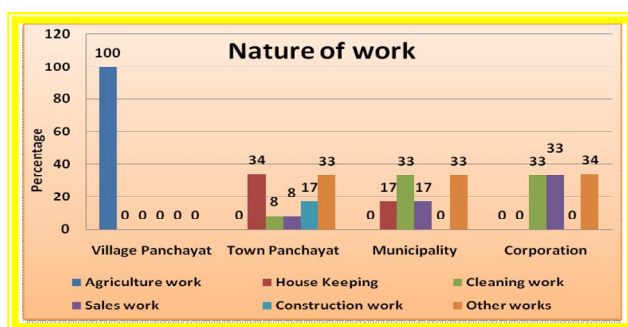
ladder and it gradually ends up in dropout. It is not caused by any single factor but is resultant of the factors that push and pull those children out of school system.

Only a well integrated approach to tackle both the sides can bring an end to the age old unsolved social issue.

Table 9 shows the nature of work the children of manual scavengers engaged in by location

Nature of working	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Agriculture work	7 (100)	0	0	0	7 (25)
House Keeping	0	4 (34)	1 (17)	0	5 (18)
Cleaning work	0	1 (8)	2 (33)	1 (33)	4 (14)
Sales work	0	1 (8)	1 (17)	1 (33)	3 (11)
Construction work	0	2 (17)	0	0	2 (7)
Others (Engineering, Textile and small industry)	0	4 (33)	2 (33)	1 (39)	7 (25)
Total	7 (100)	12 (100)	6 (100)	3 (100)	28 (100)

In the table 9 is the data on the type of jobs-the dropped out children are engaged in at their respective locations. All drop-out children of manual scavengers are in the agricultural farms in the village panchayats. In Town panchayats most of the children are engaged either in doing household chores or doing industry related tasks. A handful of children are working as construction laborers. Very few go for sales-person jobs in the shops and some other children



still go along with their parents in cleaning toilets and garbage. The scenario in the municipal towns is more or less the same as that of town panchayat. Hence, more children are going along with their parents to do garbage and toilet cleaning and the

children do not go for construction work. In the municipal corporations, children are equally engaged in three types of jobs- namely garbage and toilet cleaning along with the parents, being sales persons in shops and assistants in industries.

As stated in the study conducted by the research team on “*understanding the working conditions and context of Arunthaiyar bonded child labourers in Satyamangalam, Tamil Nadu*” (2010), it was found that all children who are engaged in agricultural works are found to be bonded laborers. These children who belong to village panchayats should be provided a legal recourse and released from bondage. The other children who belong to other locations and working as child labourers- depending on their age (upto 14 years as per the rules of Government Labour Department-TamilNadu) should be dealt within the legal framework. For those children who are accompanying their parents to do cleaning work should be closely monitored, counseled and prevented at any cost to be engaged in this unhealthy employment.

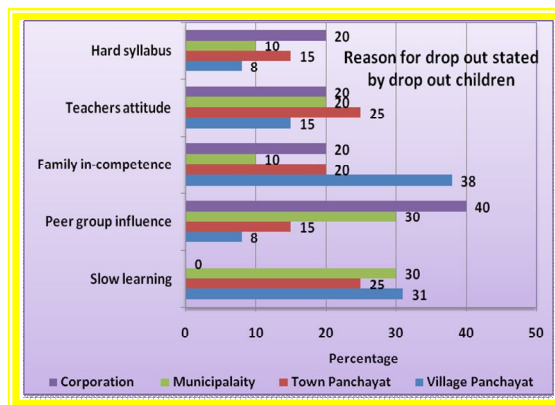
The inferences drawn from this table once again substantiates the fact that children are made to work in whatever job is available in their area and to fetch any income to support the family.

Reasons for dropout

Table no. 10 shows the list of reasons for dropout as stated by the dropout children

Reason for drop out	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Slow learning	4 (31)	5 (25)	3 (30)	0	12 (25)
Peer group influence	1 (8)	3 (15)	3 (30)	2 (40)	9 (19)
Family in-competence	5 (38)	4 (20)	1 (10)	1 (20)	11 (23)
Teachers attitude	2 (15)	5 (25)	2 (20)	1 (20)	10 (21)
Difficult syllabus	1 (8)	3 (15)	1 (10)	1 (20)	6 (12)
Total	13 (100)	20 (100)	10 (100)	5 (100)	48 (100)

As quoted in the table 10 when the drop-out children were interviewed and they stated the reasons of why they stopped going to school. Most children expressed their inability to be at par with their class mates. They said that this situation makes them lose their self confidence and pushes



them into irrevocable inferiority complex which finally ends in making them stand out of the graph of education. The children may not be aware of the underlying factors contributing to this situation and may not be able to make any attempt to rectify it. Except in corporation areas, all children state this as a major reason for their dropping out of school. A portion of the dropout children points their fingers at their peers-stating that when his neighbor is enjoying and not attending school, why should'nt he? Thus a push factor inside the school system has a complementary pull factor outside as well. Though this situation occurs in all locations, but it is slightly on the rise in corporation areas. It may be true as the probability of this reason increases from village panchayats to corporation. The possibility of getting an external benefit in the form of money or any other thing is more in these urban areas.

Some children attempted to analyse their inability in coping with school curriculum and believed that it is due to their non conducive family environment. This justification is more in villages and it is true because obviously the economic condition of the family is pathetic and it is slightly better in other areas.

Children of all locations almost equally feel that their teachers' attitude towards these children's education is pessimistic. Pointing out the incompetence of these children

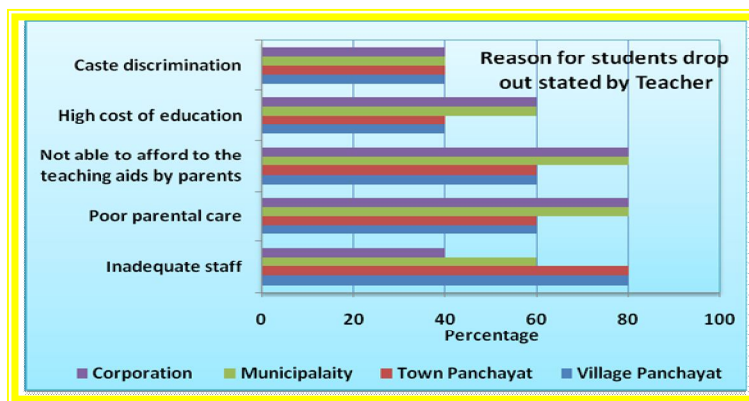
teachers attempt to brand them as 'unfit' for education as belong to a lower strata in the society which is meant for some other purpose.

Few children feel that the curriculum meant for their standard is tough for them.

Table no. 11 shows the list of reasons for dropout as quoted by the school teachers.

Reason for drop out	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Inadequate staff	4 (80)	4 (80)	3 (60)	2 (40)	13 (65)
Poor parental care	3 (60)	3 (60)	4 (80)	4 (80)	14 (70)
Parents not able to afford the education of children	3 (60)	3 (60)	4 (80)	4 (80)	14 (70)
High cost of education	2 (40)	2 (40)	3 (60)	3 (60)	10 (50)
Caste discrimination	2 (40)	2 (40)	2 (40)	2 (40)	8 (40)
Total	5 (100)	5 (100)	5 (100)	5 (100)	20 (100)

On inspection of the table 11, we can draw a general inference that teachers do not accept that dropout occur because of teachers or school environment. They only try to put the blame on others. The first reason they quote is that there is less number of staff in the school than the numbers required to manage the school. Is this in anyway related to the issue of dropout? Dropout occurs mostly among the children of



Arunthathiyars community, if inadequate staff strength is the reason for children's dropout it should have equally affected the children of other caste people also. Instead, how does that affect only these children who belong to Arunthathiyars community? There may be vacancies for teacher positions in schools which is a general administrative problem and which should be solved by government

authorities but solving it or leaving it as it is, cannot be related to the issue of dropout of children of manual scavengers. It will be only a lame excuse.

Some other teachers say that the parents of their children do not give proper care to the education of their children. It cannot be denied hundred percent and that kind of problems do exist in their families due to the inconvenient timings in their work situation.

Few other teachers quote that the parents are not able to afford the education of their children and the cost of present day education is too high for them. This is also true when compared to the income and expenditure pattern of manual scavengers to other community not working as manual scavengers. They also say that those children are unfit for education because they belong to a lower caste.

What the school system is expected to do is to accommodate these children in the school and to give them maximum care and support which is almost absent at their home in order to continue their study without break.

Teachers must realize that their responsibility is vital in developing an undeveloped community instead of repeating the same old reasons for being undeveloped. Teachers are expected to provide emotional support to these children in the schools and they are expected to link these children to all monetary and material support from the Government. They have to demand more support if needed. They are expected to treat these children equal in all respect.

Table no. 12 shows the facilities available at schools at study area.

Standard	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Library	2 (40)	3 (60)	4 (80)	5 (100)	14 (70)
Play ground	2 (40)	3 (60)	4 (80)	5 (100)	14 (70)
Play material	1 (20)	2 (40)	3 (60)	3 (60)	9 (45)

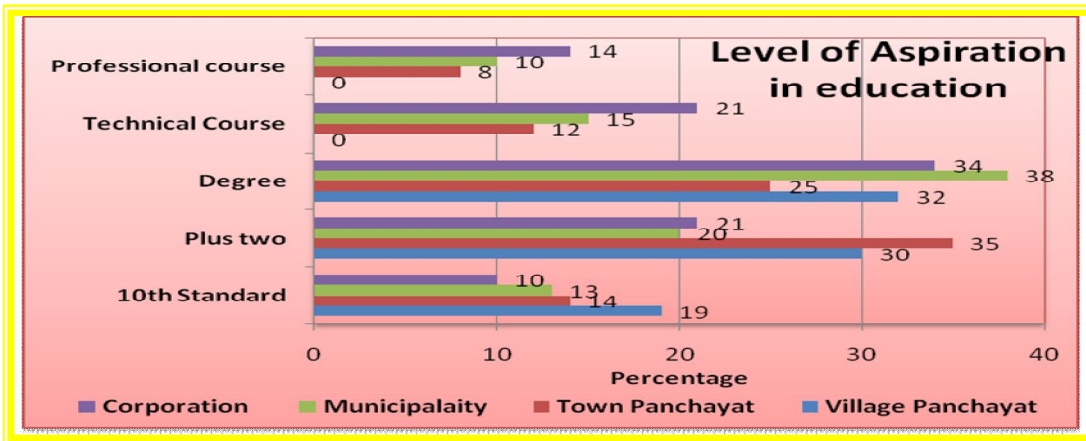
Science material	1 (20)	1 (20)	2 (40)	2 (40)	6 (30)
Other subjects material	1 (20)	1 (20)	1 (20)	2 (40)	5 (25)
Stage	0	1 (20)	1 (20)	2 (40)	4 (20)
School garden	2 (20)	2 (40)	3 (60)	3 (60)	10 (50)
Dustbin	0	0	1 (20)	2 (40)	3 (15)
Drinking water	5 (20)	5 (100)	5 (100)	5 (100)	20 (100)
Children's toilet	3 (60)	4 (80)	5 (100)	5 (100)	17 (85)
Microphone	1 (20)	2 (40)	4 (80)	5 (100)	12 (60)
Electricity	4 (80)	4 (80)	5 (100)	5 (100)	18 (90)
Radio	2 (40)	2 (40)	3 (60)	5 (100)	12 (60)
Television	0	0	1 (20)	5 (100)	6 (30)
Computer	0	0	1 (20)	2 (40)	3 (15)
First Aid Box	1 (20)	1 (20)	2 (40)	3 (60)	7 (35)
Fan	1 (20)	1 (20)	2 (40)	2 (40)	6 (30)
Total School	5 (100)	5 (100)	5 (100)	5 (100)	20 (100)

Overall inspection of the table 12 gives us an impression that schools located at corporation areas have more facilities than that of village panchayats there is positive correlation between the school facilities and rate of dropout. The more the school is equipped with facilities the less would be the rate of dropout from that school.

Table no. 13 shows the levels of educational aspirations of children

Standard	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
10th Standard	14 (38)	17 (20)	8 (17)	3 (10)	42 (21)
Plus two	11 (30)	30 (35)	10 (20)	6 (21)	57 (28)
Degree	12 (32)	22 (25)	18 (38)	10 (34)	62 (31)
Technical Course	0	10 (12)	7 (15)	6 (21)	23 (12)
Professional course	0	7 (8)	5 (10)	4 (14)	16 (8)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 13 depicts data on the levels of aspirations of the children of manual scavengers in different locations. In village panchayat children aspire for a high



level of education. But in their localities their aspiration level goes higher-to complete a professional course. This may be attributed to their exposure to education in their locality. Parent's aspirations and the current education system play an important role in determining the children's level of educational aspirations. It is a fact that without aspiring for something one cannot be motivated to achieve it.

Family environment and the drop out

Table No. 14 shows nuclear families among manual scavengers by location.

District	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Erode	3 (8)	18 (21)	14 (29)	6 (21)	41 (20)
Salem	3 (8)	23 (27)	8 (17)	7 (24)	41 (20)
Ramanathapuram	14 (38)	18 (21)	11 (23)	0	43 (22)
Coimbatore	7 (19)	12 (14)	10 (21)	16 (55)	45 (23)
Total	27 (73)	71 (83)	43 (90)	29 (100)	170 (85)

Table 14 depicts the percentage of Arunthathiyar manual scavengers in nuclear families in the study area. Upon examining the table further, it is found that the percentage ranges from 73 to 100 from village panchayats to corporation respectively. In the village panchayats three fourth of the scavengers families are in

nuclear type. In town panchayats it is found that more families live as nuclear families. In Municipal towns the percentage is still higher and in corporation cities no joint family is found. It can be inferred from the data that regardless of their locations, Arunthathiyar manual scavengers prefer to live as nuclear family. There is no need to live as a joint family as far as this community is concerned. However this data points to the fact that when both husband and wife are employed as manual scavengers- they would not be able to give proper care to their school going children. They have to leave their homes as early as 5 O'clock in the morning and they can return home only when the children have left for school. In most of the families, grand parents would not be available to take care of the school going children. It can be concluded that the structure of the family is one of the factors that affects school going children.

Table No 15 shows native place and years after immigration of manual scavengers by location

Years	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Same place	26 (70)	48 (56)	19 (40)	9 (31)	102 (51)
0 -20	0	10 (12)	3 (6)	4 (14)	17 (9)
21 - 40	5 (14)	16 (18)	17 (35)	10 (34)	48 (24)
41 - 60	6 (16)	12 (14)	9 (19)	6 (21)	33 (16)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 15 shows how long the manual scavengers have been living in the same place. Nearly three fourth of the scavengers of village panchayats have been living in the same place for years together. Migrated population within 20 years in those areas is nil and only one fourth of them have been emigrated from other places.

But, on the contrary, in the corporation cities only a little above one fourth of the scavengers have been living in the same place. Migration had taken place to corporation areas mostly between 21 years to 40 years. Same type of migration can be seen in municipal towns also.

Migration among Arunthathiyars Community is a common phenomenon because they shift their residence searching a job. It will be mostly seasonal as for as work related to agriculture is concerned; they also migrate to nearby towns to work as construction labourers and industrial labourers. Manual scavengers also migrate to the nearby towns and cities to work in the local bodies and in private organizations such as industries, hospitals, institutions etc. The data indicates that migration is almost a continuous process in all other locations except the village panchayats-which might have manual scavengers. As is stated earlier in this chapter, Arunthathiyars migrated to urban areas only after the Europeans came and settled in India. Thus, the agriculture oriented community gradually turned into manual scavengers.

In this study, migration for about 60 years from now i.e. after Indian independence can be traced. Since migration is found to be a continuous process, it is not surprising that manual scavengers have been employed in all local bodies even after the law against it has been brought into force in the year 1993. Anyhow frequent migration of the family certainly affects the continuation of the education of their children for various reasons. An exclusive study on migration of the Arunthathiyars community may be useful to understand the effects of migration on the children's education and the community as a whole.

Table 16 shows the type of ownership of the house of manual scavengers.

House ownership	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Rented House	0	5 (6)	18 (38)	4 (14)	27 (13)
Own House	36 (97)	79 (92)	14 (29)	3 (10)	132 (66)
Government Quarters	0	0	10 (21)	19 (66)	29 (15)
Other	1 (3)	2 (2)	6 (12)	3 (10)	12 (6)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 16 shows that there is no rented house in village panchayats. In municipalities most of the manual scavengers live in rented houses. In village panchayats 97 percent the scavengers live in their own houses but in corporation only ten percent of them live in their own houses. There are no government quarters in villages and town panchayats but in corporation areas most of the scavengers live in government quarters.

Table 17 shows in electricity facilities in study areas.

Electricity facilities	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Erode	4 (11)	15 (17)	15 (31)	6 (21)	40 (20)
Salem	2 (5)	24 (28)	10 (21)	7 (24)	43 (22)
Ramanathapuram	13 (35)	16 (19)	12 (25)	0	41 (20)
Coimbatore	5 (14)	9 (10)	11 (23)	16 (55)	41 (21)
Total	24 (65%)	64 (74%)	48 (100%)	29 (100%)	165 (83%)

Table 17 shows that electricity facility available in all houses of manual scavengers in corporation area. But in village panchayats it is slightly more than half of the houses of manual scavengers have electricity facility. The remaining houses are yet to be electrified.

Table 18 shows the details of toilet facilities available to manual scavengers at their homes.

Toilet facilities	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Erode	0	3 (3)	6 (13)	6 (21)	15 (8)
Salem	0	5 (6)	3 (6)	6 (21)	14 (7)
Ramanathapuram	0	3 (3)	6 (12)	0	9 (4)
Coimbatore	0	2 (2)	6 (13)	14 (48)	22 (11)
Total	0	13 (15)	21(39)	26 (41)	60 (30)

Table 18 shows data that there is no toilet facility available at homes of manual scavengers at village panchayats. But in Town panchayats and Municipalities there is some improvement in toilet facilities available at homes. Even in corporation areas its only less than half of the manual scavengers' houses possess toilet facility. Conclusively the tables, from 16 to 18 show the availability of housing facilities for the manual scavengers at their living places. The poor housing facilities may be attributed to the lacuna in educational development of their children. The poor housing facilities affect the children's physical and social environment to study at home and psychologically are not conducive for their education.

Table 19 shows the debt wise distribution of manual scavengers

Debt	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Below 10000	8 (22)	8 (9)	4 (8)	2 (7)	22 (11)
10001 – 20000	13 (35)	25 (29)	8 (16)	2 (7)	48 (24)
20001 – 30000	12 (32)	22 (26)	10 (21)	3 (10)	47 (24)
30001 – 40000	4 (11)	13 (15)	7 (15)	5 (17)	29 (14)
40001 - 50000	0	9 (10)	6 (13)	6 (21)	21 (10)
50001 - 60000	0	2 (3)	4 (8)	4 (14)	10 (5)
Above 60000	0	7 (8)	9 (19)	7 (24)	23 (12)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Overall inspection of the table 19 shows that in urban of rural, all manual scavengers invariably have a debt of some amount ranging from below Rs. 10,000 to above Rs.60, 000 but there is variation among them. In villages large no of scavengers have their debt of Rs. 20,000. But in municipalities this amount Rs. 30,000. At the same time, most of the scavengers have a debt of more than Rs. 60,000.

Table 20 shows the reasons for taking a debt

Reasons for debt	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Medical	3 (8)	30 (35)	19 (40)	10 (35)	62 (31)
Construct house	4 (11)	27 (32)	18 (37)	3 (10)	52 (26)

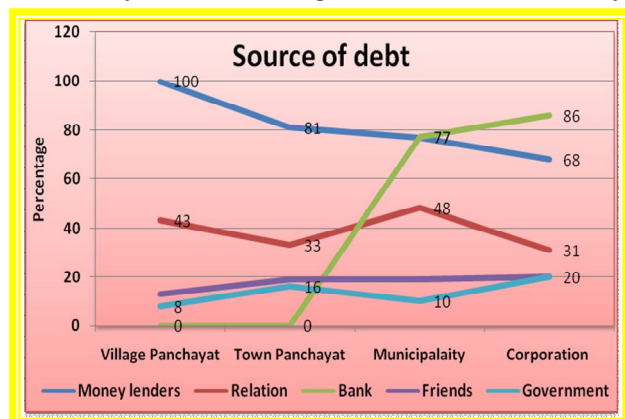
Education	1 (3)	3 (3)	6 (13)	16 (55)	26 (13)
Poverty	16 (43)	7 (8)	1 (2)	0	24 (12)
Repayment of loan	8 (22)	10 (12)	2 (4)	0	20 (10)
Death	5 (13)	9 (10)	2 (4)	0	16 (8)
Total	37 (100)	86 (100)	48 (100)	29 (100)	200 (100)

Table 20 shows the reasons for a debt being taken by the manual scavengers. In corporation areas they take loans mostly for the purpose of their children's education and considerable portion of the debt amount is being spent on medical purposes. Only a small amount has been spent on construction of houses. In town panchayats on municipalities medical expense exceeds all other expenses. But in villages the loan is taken to manage their day to day life and they use the loan amount to repay another loan or its interest.

Table 21 shows the sources of loan

Source of loan	Village Panchayat	Town Panchayat	Municipality	Corporation	Total
Money lenders	37 (100)	70 (81)	37 (77)	20 (68)	164 (82)
Relation	16 (43)	28 (33)	23 (48)	9 (31)	76 (38)
Bank	0	0	37 (77)	25 (86)	62 (31)
Friends	5 (13)	16 (19)	9 (19)	6 (20)	36 (18)
Government	3 (8)	14 (16)	5 (10)	6 (20)	28 (14)
Total	37	86	48	29	200 (100)

Table 21 shows the sources of loan for the manual scavengers. In villages all manual scavengers have taken loan from local money lenders who give loan on excessively high rate of interest. Towards corporation, the percent of manual scavengers who take loan with money lenders reduces but they



go for some other sources. In villages manual scavengers do not take loan from banks which are a proper source for taking a loan. But in municipality and corporation areas they make use of banks and take loans.

Tables from 19 to 21 shows that the manual scavengers take frequent loans to manage their family expenses. This economic back ground also affects their children's educational development to a large extent.

Chapter 3

II) QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

A TOOL FOR DATA GATHERING

As a part of the data collection process, the technique of Focus Group Discussion was applied to gather qualitative data from children groups in the study areas. Care was taken to have these groups to be heterogeneous in nature to comprise children of manual scavengers, their parents (manual scavengers – both men and women) dropped out children, adolescent boys and girls, who already, dropped out and working somewhere or not. These group discussion sessions were conducted in rural and urban areas each session not exceeding one hour duration. The outcome of these discussions were pooled and analyzed so as to draw relevant inferences regarding the issue we have taken up for study i.e. the impact of the family and the school background on the education of the children of manual scavengers.



Categorizing Children

In all the four locations (taken for comparison purposes) viz: Village Panchayats, Town Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations, we invariably found two types of children. They are either 1. School going or 2. Drop outs. Again the drop outs are conveniently found in two more subgroups a) working dropouts and b) non-working dropouts.

The qualitative data gathered through focus group discussions and personal interviews well support and substantiate the quantitative measurements which give distinctive and clear cut figures among the variables compared.

Status of School going children

Working hours of manual Scavengers starts early in the morning: they get up at 4'o clock in the morning and get ready for work. Many of them have to travel few kilometers by bus from their residences to reach the work spot. And when both husband and wife are working as scavengers, they will find no time to prepare even breakfast for themselves and for the family. They



have to leave their children alone at home and the children must get ready by themselves to go to schools. Unless there is an elder sister or brother or a close

relative like aunt or grandmother who has enough free time in the morning to assist the children in preparing them to school, the children at the age of attending primary school level find it very difficult to go to school. Many children go without breakfast and some of them take a cup of tea and bun



along with their parents early in the morning. A few other children take Tiffin from the Tiffin vendors of street side in their locality who prepare Tiffin items like idly or Dosa only in the morning time.

Parents Habits:

When the Children return home from school, the parents are not available at home. So the Children start playing around with their peers and continue till evening. When the parents



return from work, they usually come after having a drink or so. It is a habit for them to consume alcohol during and after duty to avoid the disgusting feelings at work place. But it is the nature of alcohol to trap a person who consumes it and change all his life and make him a victim to it. For him all other aspects of life including the children's present education and future life are secondary when compared to his habits. Women are not exceptional to this rule. When both the parents are working as manual scavengers, the adverse condition in the family becomes double.

Most of the Manual Scavengers families have huge loans from various money lenders. They pledge their bank pass book or land *patta* (holding) or ration card etc, but nowadays they pledge their ATM cards with those money lenders. The money lenders straight away come to ATM center and collect most of his salary amount for the repayment. This is the root cause of the problem in the family and to the children. The parents do not bother to see whether the children attend school or not that day. If they attend school parents do not enquire what happened in school; what lesson were taught to the child; whether the child has any home work and if so what has to be done in the evening or if the child needs any assistance in doing it. To all these questions and any other question related to the children's education, the child gets no answer from the parents. Any child will expect any form of appreciation or approval from his parents or significant people on what he has done. When the child fails to get any such signal, the child feels that what he/she has done is not approved or not necessary. So technically, in the absence of a positive reinforcement, the child stops repeating its good behavior or performance very soon and the child begins to think that education is not an important aspect in leading life and without education, a 'meaningful' life is possible.



Parents are the model figure for a child. The child starts firmly believing when hi/hers model lead a life without the help of education, and then he/she too can also lead a same style of life. Thus a negative outlook is formed deep in the child's mind and prepares him/her to slip away from the school path. It is a psychological change in the children and gets strengthened by the same type of events in due course and these children become potential dropouts.

TEACHERS EXPEACTATIONS UNFULFILLED

Teachers appreciate lenient students. They expect their students to follow their instructions. They encourage discipline in students' life. They are happy to assist those children who come to school neatly dressed and well groomed; who keep their books and note books neatly wrapped and labels affixed on it. They pat those children on their backs who complete their homework without fail and those who score higher ranks in the class tests and in mid term examinations. Those students who bring additional learning materials which teachers require are considered studious; those who voluntarily participate in educational tours are estimated as study conscious. Maintenance of punctuality and not taking frequent leave are also favorable factors to enjoy the admiration of teachers.

The children of scavengers do know and admit that teachers expect their students to behave in all these ways. But these children find it very difficult to fulfill all the expectations of their teachers. In the morning they go late to the school with dirty dress and non groomed hair and not even taking a proper bath because of the hardships in getting ready to come to school. The children are not happy to go to school like this. They, of course, feel inferior to peers. Sometimes children refuse to go to school without getting the additional learning material or note book or a new book or a stationery item which the teacher would have instructed them to bring it to class next day. They would not get money to buy it either. To avoid getting scolded by the teachers, children abstain from classes. Teachers ask these children to stand

up in the class and demand a reason for not obeying their instruction. But children have no reason of their own but only the poor economic condition of the family and their parents' inability to spare some money for the purpose. Children do not disclose this reason in the class room since it affects their self esteem; or after much demand from teachers, they admit this with much hesitation. Teachers also leave them after getting a reassurance from the children that they would bring it next day.

When this kind of behavior is getting repeated, teachers use abusive words and indirectly discriminate them from other students; try to brand them 'Unfit' for education because of his family background and 'fit' for particular occupations only. Children get wounded by the approach of the teacher and develop inferiority complex in him. He also realizes that his family background is also not changeable as he wishes. Because when they ask their parents for money to buy note books etc., the parents express their inability by indirectly blaming the teacher. They say that teachers pester for money from students which is only to misuse it to their favor and not for the students' welfare.

Thus, the children become mere victims to the cold war between the teachers and the parents. The Children, though they are at school, become potential dropouts.

Curriculum Difficulty:-

When the children were asked whether they were good at studies, most of them refused to respond to the interviewer, some said "yes, to some extent." which obviously means 'not bad'. But some Children turn their face to the other side to avoid answering the same question. The reality, in their understanding they feel inferior to other children, especially this is



more in the rural areas than the urban areas in the study districts.

The children complain that they are unable to understand what is taught in the class room. The fact is that the curriculum is so designed that it matches the age group of the learners. Hence it is suitable for the children of Scavengers also. But, these children have become slow learners due to the circumstances at home. They hardly ever read the lessons at home and do the home work nor do they get any help from their parents to complete the home work. Moreover, they do not get any appreciation for learning new things from their parents. All these factors make them become dull in studies. Though they are born with enormous capabilities like any other normal children, their potential is suppressed and gradually eliminated. So in order to improve these slow learning processes, only the teachers and the school can help them. Teachers must realize their role and take responsibility to help these slow learners by giving more attention, care and prioritise slow performers and find out the cause of their problems to overcome their learning difficulties. The teachers must realize that ignorance is the cause of failure and they have to involve themselves more with the children on this issue and seek solutions. Apart from these, the bilingual nature of this community also plays some role in making the curriculum more difficult to understand.

Adverse living conditions:-

The Physical surrounding of the dwelling places is not very conducive to the



education of the manual scavenger's children. In rural and urban, the dwelling places of scavengers are separate, mainly off the main village or living area. They live in group houses. The size of the house is approximately 10 ft. breadth into 16

ft. length. This house has to accommodate at least 4 members in the family. The roof of these houses varies from thatched to concrete. In Corporation areas multi storied quarters are available to a limited number of scavengers. The remaining scavengers have built their huts in vacant lands available near the quarters or anywhere in the city. These huts are not electrified fully. Drinking water facility for any of these houses is not yet provided and there is no toilet facility for 90% of the houses. They have to use street tabs and common toilets. Many children use open toilets only.

Usually these group houses are constructed in the secluded places outside the main



dwelling areas. It is evident in all the study areas, namely Salem, Erode, Coimbatore and Ramanathapuram Districts. This place is normally used to dump the Garbage of the town. Where the solid waste is dumped, the waste of slaughter houses, poultry wastes fish chopping wastes, Vegetable market wastes, bio medical wastes, wastes from hotels are dumped only here.

The total drainage of the town ends only in this low lying areas. The stagnated drainage water is the source for several infections. It is a

favorable living place for mosquitoes and pigs which also spread diseases. The Streets of those colonies are so narrow that only using them as foot path is possible. In such a congested street, there is no street lighting. In many places, these vacant lands are adjacent to the burial ground or crematorium. There is not even a mud wall



between the burial ground and the colony to separate them.

When the grown up children get married, they form a separate family. They build a side top on the walls of this house and make a separate portion to live in. So, small gap between the group houses are filled like this and the area becomes more congested. **See the picture** below- CMC Colony, Ukkadam and Coimbatore. So the Second and third Generation children must share very little space for their use.



From the above description about the dwelling places of the manual scavengers of Arunthathiyar Community, one can easily understand that this place is not conducive for the school going children. Instead, these children are habituated to the filthy odor and dirty streets.

Issues of School going children

1. Coming late to School
2. Not dressed neatly
3. Difficulty in understanding the Curriculum
4. Bilingual Problem
5. Books are not available on Time
6. Expenses not met on the following:
 - Examination fees

Basic Stationery

Shortage of textbooks

Insufficient number of Uniforms

No expenditure related to play, sports or Picnic/Visits

7. Home work incomplete
8. Cultural events, public programmes which disturbs the children
9. Negative and discriminatory attitude of the teachers and fellows students belonging to other caste groups
10. Poor performance makes the children feel inferior
11. No private tuition facilities
12. Parents not educated to assist the children in home work

To conclude, the situation of the school-going children is pathetic and these children are not attending school happily; they are heading towards a point at which they feel stuck with and slowly slip away from school. In short, the probability of dropping out of school is really high.

2. Status of Dropout children

As we discussed earlier, children in the above situation, at some stage in the educational ladder, finally becomes a dropout.



The stages of dropout vary with the magnitude of the push and pull factors that operate on the individual child. Most of these factors have been discussed in depth in the previous section and they need not be repeated once again. Here, the focus is more to try to locate the whereabouts of

these 'Out of School children' in the community-there are two possibilities where these children could be; either they will be working somewhere or they will be wandering as street children.

From the interviews and group discussions with the children groups, an attempt is made to identify the places where these children are working. For the purpose of analysis-working dropouts are put into two major categories-(1) Below 14 years and (2) between 14 years - 18 years.

Attitude of the parents

Attitude of the Parents towards their children's occupation plays a major role in determining the selection of occupation. When the children drop out of school and remain idle at home parents decide to fit them in some job. Some parents take their child along with



them to their work place to assist him. The child will assist the parents in driving the bullock cart, carrying the cleaning implements, carrying the garbage basket etc. Parents feel that if their child gets the job of scavenger in the local bodies, it will be a better job for the child from any other opportunity he may get in private sector. It is a secured job with the government –including pension and other benefits and would be secured till his retirement. This is one of the reasons why this inhuman occupation continues from generation to generation.

But not all parents think in the same way. Though they are not able to support the education for their children, they like their children to get some other dignified job and leave this filthy situation as soon as possible.

Occupations of dropout children:

These children are engaged in assistant jobs-in two wheeler workshops, engineering industries, scrap shops lathes and workshops. Few



children are going to temporary jobs like construction workers, concrete mixing work and road laying works etc. It is important to note that these children are aged below 14 years and engaging them in any job for income is a violation of the Child Labor Prohibition Act of India.

Occupations of adolescent children: - Male

Children from 15-18 years are engaged in various jobs available in their locations. Some male children in this category-in all study areas-go for coolie work-whatever is available like loading and unloading, cart pulling, Drum beating in parties. Few other boys go for shop cleaning work along with their parents and slowly involve themselves in scavenging work. They go for waste cleaning in hotels, lodges restaurants during night time.

In Coimbatore, in the heart of the city-there is an area populated with Gold smith shops-in this area many goldsmiths makes gold ornaments. When they work, a tiny portion of gold will go as waste, and mingle with drainage. If this gold is collected, one can sell it back to jewelers. The children of scavengers, who are tolerant to drainages, sieve the drainage mud and water to separate gold granules from it. Some boys have taken it as their regular work to make an income. Since they do it only during night time, their regular work is not affected. Those adults who are already doing this work introduce these adolescent boys to the work.

Silver Smith workshops are also prevalent in Salem City which is semi mechanized in nature. These cottage industries need semi skilled workers to produce silver ornaments like anklets, rings etc. Though the job is temporary in nature, the Arundhatiyars children get continuous work throughout the year. So, a mediocre income is guaranteed in this job. The adolescent drop-out children of scavengers prefers to go to the silver ornament making jobs.

Apart from the regular job, the Arunthaiyar children are engaged in past time activities like running a fan club or running a dance club etc. They conduct stage dance programmes in the festivals parties and public functions which fetch them an occasional income. Some adolescent boys affiliate themselves in political parties and work for party programmes. Affixing wall posters, making tents, erecting cutouts and flag poles are some of the activities in the party programmes.

Occupations of adolescent children: Female

Occupations which these dropouts prefer to do are that of sales girls in the shops. Some other girls work as assistants in low level jobs in engineering industries. Basket making, domestic help, ornamental stitching and making clothes and separating threads from knitted clothes are other jobs-which are within their access.

Status of Non working drop outs

The real seriousness of the dropout phenomenon lies with the non working dropouts. Non working drop outs accompany their parents to work spots only to assist them in their job. They drive the bullock cart while their parents load the garbage to the cart or carry the implements along with him. Many of them become scrap collectors in the streets. They collect old plastics, polythene bags and covers iron and steel wastes, old liquor bottles, PET bottles, Cork lids, Aluminum and other metal scraps etc. from the garbage and street sides in order to sell them to the scrap shops for meager amount.

They go along with parents and assist them in their work. They do cleaning works in tea shops, market areas, and super markets, vegetable market engineering and automobile workshops in the early morning and get a weekly or monthly payment of a small amount. Since, children of below 14 years working the commercial place is an offence, they do it early in the morning to avoid legal action against their

employers. These children go usually along with their parents and in due course they take up the job and start doing independently.

Issues of non working and non school going children

- Development of bad habits
- Development of attitude and behavior unrelated to the age
- Need money for daily expenses
- Go out of the control of the parents and society
- More possibilities for them to become juvenile delinquents
- There is no useful time-passing activity
- Wandering behavior
- Children are exploited and abused by miscreants
- If work, then get an amount which is more than sufficient to meet personal expenses
- Since there is no proper guidance from parents or elders the children are unable to plan their future life.
- Due to poor educational qualification, the children are unable to do any job or benefit from any government schemes which requires basic education

Interview with stakeholders of the issue:

Community leaders:

Community leaders are of the opinion that this occupation is caste based and these workers are habituated to the filthy and abhorrent nature of the occupation. It is inhuman and also against human rights. So, it should be abolished at once and Arunthathiyars community should be liberated from this unhealthy practice and employment.

Political and trade union leaders:

Political and trade union leaders suggest abolishing the occupation altogether but as an interim remedy; the government has to adopt shift system to enable the parents to give adequate care to their school going Children.

Government officials:

Government officials say that government has entirely abolished the system from the state. Government is implementing several schemes for the rehabilitation for the manual scavengers but since they do not have proper education, they are not able to utilize them properly.

Officials of the school education:

Officials of the school education are of the opinion that the parents are not educated and so they are unable to care for their children or provide them with any education in a proper way. Whatever special care the teachers give to the children in few cases, is insufficient to develop these children because the children become incompetent and incapacitated due to the poor family background.

Chapter 4

Case Studies of Arunthatiyar children in inadequate care

Case Study 1

Murugan, 13 years old boy is studying at present in 8th standard at a school in Kichipalayam area near Salem. His parents are employed as sanitary workers in Salem Corporation. He has decided not to continue his education any longer and join the work of his parents or go to the silver sieving work.

He does not know the Tamil Alphabets well. He was not able to understand Mathematics, tables etc and English. So, the teachers used to scold him, beat him up and humiliate him by cursing that he is fit only for the job that his parents are doing. He told his mother about this. She said that if he doesn't study well he has to stop going to school. At present, he feels humiliated to go to school. He is not able to even write his mother's name or father's name. They all tease him how could he be in the 8th standard. During the interview with this boy, he was chewing *pan parag* (tobacco) etc and frequently spitting.

Case study – 2

In the heart of Coimbatore city, a senior man-partially blind, aged about 55 years, earns Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 per day through his full time work of begging in the same area. He has developed good relationship with families of manual scavengers and sanitary workers in colony located in that area. He used to give the manual scavengers loans on interest. Misusing this proximity, he developed sexual relationship with women of sanitary workers' families. He victimized their children now and then by giving them eatables in order to gratify his sexual desires. Two female Children were psychologically traumatised by this man and endured sexual exploitation for six-seven years. They were sent to Children's home for counseling and rehabilitation. They have now returned to normalcy and have been returned home

at their adolescent age. One of them is aged 13 years and the other girl is aged 16 years old. Efforts have been taken to send one of the girls to school once again. It was found out that because of the absence of parental care and their bad conduct, these girls became susceptible to the sexual harassment of the old man.

Case study 3

A group of about 15 children in the age group of 13 to 14 years, belonging to the families of manual scavengers of Arunthathiyars community-all school drop outs from 5th standard to 8th standard. Current position of these children is that they collect iron and plastic scrap and sieve drainage mud to collect gold granules and sell them for a meager amount. Because of the absence of parental care and enormous spare time available and many pass time activities, they happen to get into some kind of substance abuse or addictions. A new addiction rapidly spreads in among these children since they are socially backward class and living below poverty line. They use substances like rubber solution tinker paste different glues, gums etc which are produced from petroleum chemicals which are easily available and cost wise economical too.

The substance which is used for intoxication is kept in a piece of old cloth and twisted so as not to fall when it is rotated. It is rotated for couple of minutes till the odor of the substance spreads out. This odor is inhaled to get intoxicated. These children are now addicted to this habit. One of the boys who had been addicted to this habit for the past four to five years recently died of brain fever. Another still continues this habit without realizing the disaster ahead of him. When these children were interviewed for the study purpose it was found that because of the absence of proper parental care and protection and lack of proper education these children have been pushed into the present pathetic condition and run a risk of turning themselves into antisocial elements in their future.

Case study 4

Anbu, age 13 years, has studied up to 8th standard. His father's name is Govindan and mother's name is Mani. His mother is a sanitary worker employed through a private company in the Salem Corporation. He goes for cleaning work in shops and workshops, where he will sweep the floor of the front yard, spray water to wet the floor, and put *rangoli* (colors) at the door step. He earns up to Rs.20 per day. Now for the past one month he goes to work at a workshop. They are paying him Rs.50 per day. His jobs at the workshop include scratching with file, polishing silver anklets with acid. Sometimes the acid spills on his fingers and gets he suffers from severe burning. At that time, the employer asked him to dip the burned finger into kerosene and continue the work. Some times when he replaces the acid, the fumes enter his nasal openings causing irritation and tears in the eyes. He has been working without realizing the ill effects of such chemicals and acids on his health condition.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Following are some of the conclusions drawn from the data analysis in the previous chapter.

1. In general, three fourth of the children of manual scavengers of Arunthathiyars community are studying in the school and one fourth are out of school.
2. Dropout occurs more in the rural areas than in the urban areas
3. More male children drop out than female children
4. Most often dropped out children become child labor in the Ludlum area.
5. Dropout in rural areas and became bonded labour in agriculture oriented jobs.
6. Drop out starts right from the first standard in rural areas and its is maximum at eighth standard
7. In urban area dropout starts at 8th standard and continued in higher standards
8. Maximum dropout occurs at the age of 13 years and in the 8th standard.
9. Several factors act on the children and make them incompetent in the school which is seemingly the ultimate reason for dropout.
10. School going children are misguided by imbibing their dropped out peers and seniors as models.
11. Teachers have unfavorable attitude towards the children of manual scavengers which causes them to attempt to brand the children 'unfit' for education.
12. The level of aspiration of children in their education ladder in village panchayats is maximum a degree and that in other places a few percentage goes to profession courses.
13. The better the school facilities present in a school the lesser the rate of drop out from that school.
14. Type of ownership to house has no effect on the rate of drop out.

15. Inadequate housing facilities affect the children's education - no electricity, no separate toilet, inadequate living space etc.
16. Family's financial management does not give preference to education to the children in rural areas and it gives some preference in other places.
17. Children develop adoptability to the unsanitary living conditions but they develop an aversive feeling to the school because their behaviors are criticized and condemned by teachers.
18. Because of the adverse nature of working hours and bad habits, parents do not take care that their children have education and hardly get any time to spend with their children.
19. Parents do not have much exposure to higher education facilities. Their level of aspiration is low and their attitude towards their children's education is pessimistic which cripple them to take decisions on the education of their children.
20. Parents give much importance to local community festivals and functions but they do not give that much importance to their children education.
21. Dropout children work for a meager income in unsafe conditions
22. Parents and children are not fully aware of the government sponsored schemes and financial assistances for self employment, and they do not know the formalities to obtain them.
23. Children get trapped and avail many opportunities to become drug abusers and delinquents.

Recommendations to improve the conditions of the Arunthathiyar children in inadequate care or at the risk of losing parental care:

The present study is constrained and constricted to focus its attention on the specific issues of the children of manual scavengers who belong to Arunthathiyars community in Tamilnadu. There can be no ambiguous notion that children should normally be in the schools. The results obtained through the present study substantiate that these children are placed not only outside of schools but are placed in other unsafe places engaging in hazardous activities. Few children are not working and are at the risk of becoming juvenile delinquents. The grave concern over this issue is to bring these abandoned, children in inadequate parental care (not orphaned) back to the main stream social life. The current rate of school dropouts cannot be brought down until and unless the school environment is made amiable for the children and for the same reason, the dropped out children cannot be re-sent to the school. Here, in this section, we do make some strong recommendations to implement them on the basis of the results we have obtained through this study and on the basis of the understanding that the only solution to this issue is to continue the children's education without break in the school itself. Until the school becomes amiable to children, on ad-hoc and interim basis, arrangements should be made outside the formal school to continue the studies. There is sufficient legislation, enactments and even recommendations-both at state and central government level-to curb prevalence of this unhealthy occupation and to enhance the quality of life of the children. However, the implementation of laws and policies in this regard is quite weak and needs to be strengthened immediately by taking stringent measures against those who fail to implement them.

Recommendations to the government

School education

- In every educational institution there must be Arunthathiyars teachers.

- Ensure 6% reservation for Arunthathiyars Students at all educational institutions.
- Vigil over caste based violence/atrocities against the Arunthathiyar /Dalits community and intervenes during the abuse and violation of the rights of the Dalits.
- Undertake fact-finding missions for particular cases of atrocities, and untouchability practices in the schools and community and follow-up to resolve the issue.
- Scholarships targeted for all Arunthathiyars students at the beginning of the academic year.
- Sensitive implementation of basic fundamental rights as guaranteed in the Indian Constitution- and minimum human standards for access to resources
- Teacher training including sensitization on caste issues to overcome stigma and discrimination.
- Basic physical infrastructural facilities like water, electricity, classrooms, toilets, etc., important determinants of the learning environment-all such facilities need to be adequately and urgently provided. This requires a multi-departmental or “integrated” approach.
- Teachers posts in primary and secondary schools are unfilled for years leading to the serious scarcity of teachers in the public schools. This should be filled in all government schools, it reduce the dropout level. Primary schools should effectively have atleast 5 classrooms and 6 teachers.
- Textbooks need to be modified and contents of syllabus made more oriented to the dalit children. Play methods for teaching should be implemented in an effective way.
- Stationery-Notebooks and pencil/pens should also be provided free to dalit children throughout the year

- In the educational institutions the atmosphere to be made conducive for the participation of the parents of the Arunthathiyars Children by organizing functions, exhibitions, etc., so that relationships can be established.
- Children may be allowed to participate in the development programmes in the areas during summer vacations/ holidays so that they can earn and learn.
- Special parents meeting to be conducted monthly twice along with Children

Government departments

- Keep vigil over the implementation of socio economic schemes for Dalits communities, ensuring 100 percent achievement of the targets and reaching the intended beneficiaries.
- Government provides hostel facilities for the Arunthathiyars students, facilities of hostel must be very clean and good.
- State Government should take steps seriously to control the dropout among Arunthathiyars children. This needs to be checked immediately.
- The State ensures timely disbursement of scholarship money to the beneficiaries and necessary steps may be taken to sort out various problems in the implementation of the scheme.
- Implement all the human rights acts for the protection of rights of the dalits, especially the Arunthathiyar community in an effective manner.
- All basic amenities to be provided in the Arunthathiyar community in their houses and they should not be secluded from the mainstream society.
- Shift system work is to be implemented –especially for women workers.
- Counseling to the parents and children to respond to their psychological problems.
- Vocational training centers to be established including NSLRS programmes at Manual Scavengers residential area.
- Issue free *patta* and ownership certificate-for land holding (through Revenue dept and Slum Clearance Board Dept).

- Human rights education syllabus added to the school curriculum.

NGOs

- Awareness and sensitization of the communities on Dalits rights and campaign against untouchability practices.
- Many families engaged in unhealthy occupations like scavenging are not aware of the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. It should be given wide publicity and parents engaged in such unhealthy occupations should be motivated to send their children to schools.
- Evening tuition centers to be run for the school going children
- Counseling to the parents and children to solve their psychological issues.
