

Silenced Grievances: Waste Workers' Knowledge, Perceptions, and Experiences Regarding Occupational safety and Health Hazards in LG's of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Occupational safety and health hazards are a significant public health concern worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries. In Bangladesh, twelve city corporations produce vast amounts of solid waste, and thousands of waste workers are employed by these corporations to collect, transport, and dispose of it. These workers suffer from various diseases and are often neglected and maltreated despite performing risky jobs. However, the literature on occupational health hazards relevant to solid waste collection in the local government of Bangladesh, particularly on waste workers' livelihoods, working environment, and health risks, is limited. This article explores the nature of the violence waste workers face, along with the societal expectations and perspectives that perpetuate it. Data were gathered from Cumilla City Corporation in Bangladesh through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions with waste workers, key-informant interviews with various stakeholders, and observations of waste collection and disposal points. Thematic analysis shows that waste workers experience violence in the occupational setting, encompassing physical and psychological abuse, persistent pressure, constraints on personal liberty, denial of treatment, exploitation, discrimination, social exclusion, undermined social recognition, and wage withholding. Fear of job loss prevented them from filing complaints. Supervisors described the waste workers as 'illiterate', 'low class', 'insubordinate', 'uncooperative', and 'reluctant to work', thereby rationalising their conduct as acceptable. Other stakeholders largely dismissed these issues. The study highlights the need for actionable measures to prevent workplace violence and address emerging occupational health concerns in Bangladesh's waste management sector.

Keywords: Public Health, Occupational Safety, Health Hazards, Waste Workers, Waste Management, City Corporation, Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

Occupational health hazards are remarkably increasing in the waste management sector of local cities, and local governments are facing challenges in achieving public health-related SDG goals (Kavouras, Vardopoulos, Mitoula, Zorpas, & Kaldis, 2022). The goals include good health and well-being, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, and sustainable cities and communities (Reis, Oliveira, Braga, Silva, & Silva, 2020; WHO, 2021). Solid waste handling in the municipal area is a growing work-related health hazard (Yang et al., 2001). The collection and transportation of solid waste require heavy physical activities such as collecting waste from drains, roads, and bins, and the loading and unloading of garbage trucks (Ray, Mukherjee, Roychowdhury, & Lahiri, 2004). While performing their jobs, waste workers are generally exposed to many health risks- injuries, respiratory diseases, musculoskeletal, gastrointestinal, and infectious diseases (Abd El-Wahab et al., 2014). They also suffer from several pathogens (bacteria, fungi, viruses, parasites, and cysts), various toxic substances, vehicle exhaust fumes, noise, extreme temperature, and ultraviolet radiation (Lavoie & Dunkerley, 2002). Consequently, solid waste workers are the victims of the high rate of occupational health hazards (Madl et al., 2008).

Occupational safety and health hazards remain a significant public health concern worldwide, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Although city conservancy department in Bangladesh's twelve city corporations strive to dispose of the vast amounts of solid waste they generate, a significant portion remains unaddressed, owing to weak governance and a shortage of fund and logistical support (Ahsan et al., 2014; Bhuiyan, 2010). Thousands of waste workers are employed by these city corporations to collect, transport, and dispose of the waste (Hasan & Chowdhury, 2006), often working day and night without adequate occupational health and safety measures (Ahsan et al., 2014). Although the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 was intended to ensure workers' health, hygiene, and occupational safety, local government officials have not implemented it properly (MoLE, 2021). As a result, these workers suffer from various diseases and remain neglected and maltreated despite performing risky jobs for low salaries (Phosrikham, Laohasiriwong, Luenam, & Soeung, 2020; Ramitha, Ankitha, Alankrutha, & Anitha, 2021). Bangladesh's Perspective Plan 2021-41 has also emphasised reducing

work-related health risks by strengthening the capacity of local governments (GED, 2020).

In the cities of Bangladesh, the working environment of waste workers needs to be improved (Kabir, Farhana, Akter, Jesmin, & Ali, 2015). Waste workers in Dhaka city are exposed, while they work, to vast amounts of dust, contaminated organic matter, airborne particulates, bacteria, noise, and ergonomic stress (Anwar, Mehmood, Nasim, Khurshid, & Khurshid, 2013), and often lack adequate knowledge and understanding of public health-related safety measures (Hassan, Ahmed, Rahman, & Biswas, 2008). A similar scenario prevails in other cities, such as Cumilla City Corporation, which was constituted in 2011 by amalgamating two municipalities. The city consists of 27 wards, covers an area of 53 sq km, and has a population of 0.80 million producing 200 tons of waste per day; thousands of waste workers in the city corporation's conservancy department work to manage this waste (Majumder & Karim, 2012).

Several researchers have studied the occupational health hazards faced by waste cleaners globally. Studies in Latin America have evaluated the range of diseases and risks faced by waste workers and documented environmental, social, and health impacts related to solid waste management, including an assessment of Mexican municipalities that identified correlations between the development and implementation of health-hazard policies (Cervantes et al., 2021), while other work has examined the health situations and occupational hazards affecting waste workers in Brazil (Zolnikov, da Silva, Tuesta, Marques, & Cruvinel, 2018). Further studies have examined the nature of activities and knowledge of work-related health risks and practices among waste collectors in Ghana (Asibey, Amponsah, & Yeboah, 2019), used a cross-sectional design to show how the working environment affects waste workers' quality of life in a German City (Velasco Garrido, Bittner, Harth, & Preisser, 2015), identified respiratory and skin-related diseases among waste collectors in India (Priyanka & Kamble, 2017), and examined the safety factors, hazards, and vulnerabilities street sweepers face during waste collection in low- and middle-income countries (Gutberlet & Uddin, 2017). However, the literature on occupational health hazards relevant to solid waste collection in Bangladesh, particularly regarding waste workers' livelihood, working environment, and health risks, remains limited. Uddin, Gutberlet, Ramezani, and Nasiruddin (2020) explored the everyday life of informal waste pickers in Dhaka city; Akter, Hawlader, and Hoque (2019) examined

awareness among waste pickers at Matuail Sanitary Landfill in Dhaka city; Sharior et al. (2023) assessed the organisational capacity, shortcomings, and challenges in local governance of waste management during COVID-19 in Dhaka City; and Fattah, Amin, Nasrin, and Sultana (2018) identified governance constraints in waste management and the livelihoods of waste cleaners in Dhaka City. These studies, however, focus only on Dhaka city, and research on occupational health hazards among solid waste workers in other cities, or from the lens of public health and occupational health risks, remains minimal; no study has yet examined occupational health and safety in Cumilla City Corporation's solid waste management. Comprehensive research exploring the livelihoods, work environment experiences, and physical and mental health of waste workers in Cumilla City Corporation is therefore necessary. This study aims to develop an in-depth understanding of city waste collectors' knowledge and perceptions concerning occupational safety and related health hazards in the cities of Bangladesh, especially Cumilla City Corporation.

2. Objectives and Research Question

The aim of this research is to explore the waste worker's livelihood, work environment experience, and the physical and mental health phenomena of the waste workers of local government of Bangladesh

Research Question:

What are the waste worker's practices, experiences, knowledge and perceptions regarding occupational safety and health hazards in their livelihood and working environment in Cumilla City Corporation?

3. Methodology

Research Design

The researcher used qualitative research techniques. Qualitative research helps deeper insight into a specific problem and the findings provide recommendations based on common emerging themes (Benaquisto & Given, 2008; Creswell, 2014). The researcher utilised a transformative and constructive philosophical worldview in this research (Neuman & Robson, 2012).

Study Setting

The study was conducted in Cumilla City Corporation, one of the 12 city

corporation of Bangladesh. Cumilla City Corporation constituted in 2011 amalgamating two municipalities. The city consists of 27 wards, has an area of 53 sq km and a population of 0.80 million who produce 200 tons of waste per day, and thousands waste workers of city corporation conservancy are working for waste management (Majumder & Karim, 2012).

Data Collection (including sample distribution)

The qualitative study employed in-depth interviews (IDIs) of fifteen workers (n=20) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with fourteen officials (n=14) of a City Corporation, NGO, doctors and the officials of the local government ministry. One focus group discussions (FGDs) with 36 waste workers. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the waste workers.

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the waste workers

	IDIs (n=20)	FGDs (n=36)
Age (Years)		
18-24	8	10
25-32	6	11
33-40	2	6
40+	4	9
Marital Status		
Married	10	20
Separated/divorced	2	6
Unmarried	8	10
Education		
None/illiterate	14	16
1-5year	4	10
6-10yrs	1	8
10+	1	2

The research team visited Cumilla City Corporation and observed the waste workers' livelihoods, working environment, and working life, investigating conditions by observing the waste collection points, transport, dumping areas, disposal process, and the logistics and clothing used by waste workers. Eight workplace observations, each lasting 6–10 hours, were carried out to examine the cleaners' lived experiences of health issues during work. Through direct observation, the study assessed working conditions, job tasks, rest intervals, the behaviour of officials and supervisors, and the health risks associated with working in drains and on roads. The researcher made detailed observational notes at the worksite, captured photographs, and later coded these observational notes. The value of observation lies in its capacity to document authentic behaviour and practices in a natural context. Data collection took place from December 2023 to September 2024; the extended period was mainly due to challenges in gaining access to workplaces and conducting interviews with waste workers.

The researcher obtained permission from the city corporation to visit the sites and speak with officials and workers. The research employed a purposive sampling technique to select waste workers, officials, doctors, and other key stakeholders. Before data collection, the research team informed the authorities—the Mayor and CEO of the City Corporation—and then conducted interviews with senior officials of the corporation's conservancy department, who provided a list of waste workers and their contact details. While visiting the sites, the team also met other relevant stakeholders where it felt this was warranted.

Based on the literature, an unstructured questionnaire was prepared for the interviews and continuously updated as the interviews progressed. Unstructured interview guides were used to facilitate conversation with participants, and the discussions centred on the nature of occupational tasks in the City Corporation's waste management, workers' experiences, the factor influencing supervisors' and officials' behaviour, and both workers' and officials' perceptions of the workplace. All interview guides were pilot-tested on five people with comparable, homogeneous demographic profiles, who were not part of the study participants, to improve their suitability and refine interview procedures for the local context. Interviews were conducted in Bengali, the local language, and then transcribed. Each interview helped the research team develop better-articulated questions to explore the themes emerging from the field.

In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with waste

workers were carried out at their workplaces, homes, or other settings the participants deemed convenient. Discussions took place at the residences of both male and female workers, in accordance with their stated preferences, as participants preferred to stay away from their workplace to speak freely about their experiences of work, life, and health; the researcher likewise sought to avoid the formal setting of the waste area. FGDs were therefore conducted in a room voluntarily offered by the city corporation, while KIIs were conducted in private rooms near the working area, with appointments scheduled by telephone for each participant. The researcher facilitated the FGDs, and each interview and FGD lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent. Light refreshments, including snacks and water, were provided to all participants.

Data Analysis

The researcher converted all interview recordings into written transcripts and verified them against the audio data to ensure accuracy and consistency prior to coding. Two university graduates assisted with transcription, and the researcher reviewed a subset of the transcripts to ensure consistency. The data were analysed using an inductive thematic method (Schreier, Stamann, Janssen, Dahl, & Whittal, 2019; Yin, 2011). To undertake the thematic analysis, the descriptive data were repeatedly reviewed to ensure thorough familiarisation, enabling the development of an initial coding framework. The analytic process combined deductively derived codes informed by the research questions with inductively generated codes emerging from the data. The inductive component involved an open-coding procedure in which discrete segments of data were systematically labelled, followed by the aggregation of these initial codes into higher-order categories, which were then further refined and organised into overarching themes capturing the salient patterns within the dataset. The researcher also used Nvivo software to develop systematic, specific themes from the qualitative data gathered through interviews, FGDs, and observations. Finally, the themes were illustrated through case narratives.

4. Results

Socio-demographic profile and nature of the job

The findings indicate that a large proportion were below the age of 25. Most participants were married and had dependent children. In terms of educational attainment, the majority had no formal schooling or had education limited

to primary level (up to grade five). Most worked as helpers and drain cleaners or road cleaners, while some were employed as waste downloader and uploader in truck. All had migrated from rural villages outside the city or living in the slums of the city. Those who have children have to leave their children behind to work in the waste management sector of the city corporation and support their family income.

The findings are categorized based on the types of violence reported in the workplace. The most commonly reported forms of violence in this study included verbal abuse, restrictions on various rights, and work-related constraints that impacted how these backward people were treated in the workplace. This analysis of experiences with violence focuses on two key aspects: first, identifying the various types of violence occurring in the waste management industry in the municipalities of Bangladesh and their impact on people's health and safety. Second, it explores the perspectives of different stakeholders on the factors contributing to these acts of violence.

Verbal and Physical abuse

All participating waste workers indicated that they were routinely subjected to verbal mistreatment by their supervisors, including being shouted at, demeaned, subjected to disparaging remarks, and addressed in an abrasive manner within the workplace. Verbal aggression, particularly shouting, was identified as the predominant form of abuse, with respondents perceiving their supervisors as exhibiting a notable absence of empathy. Participants also recounted experiences in which supervisors subjected them to public humiliation, explaining that they were frequently 'spoken to as though we are less than human' and 'treated badly, like servants'.

One waste worker shared,

"If we make even a small mistake during work, the line supervisors shout at us. We keep quiet because if we say anything, we might lose our jobs. We are not even allowed to talk among ourselves while working."

A number of workers described incidents of physical mistreatment in the workplace, although such occurrences were reported less often than verbal abuse. The most frequently mentioned forms of physical aggression included slapping, pinching, pushing, and throwing waste materials at workers' faces. One participant stated,

"Today, I reached the work area thirty minutes late, and my supervisor became angry. He pushed me, shouted at me, and even lifted his hand as if he would slap me. Luckily, another supervisor stepped in and took him away."

Another worker explained the underlying reasons for such behavior, “If we cannot meet the target or if we make a mistake, they hit us. One day, my supervisor threw dust and garbage at me because I made a mistake while cleaning the drain. If we try to say anything, they get angry and slap us.”

Exploitation

Most of the waste workers reported that they often are subjected to physical and verbal abuse not only in workplace, but also in living area- slums. They face exploitation, such as low wages, long working hours, unsafe working condition. As they live in slum area, many regular facilities and recognition enjoyed by the regular citizens, are not enjoyed by them.

Discrimination

Waste workers living in slum area are often stereotyped as uneducated, criminal, unclean, and leading social marginalization. They face barriers in accessing basic services such as health care, education, and sanitation due to systemic neglect by various institutions. They also lack access to clean water, and electricity. They are excluded from the urban planning and development. They are often excluded from the political process and decision-making, which hinders their ability to advocate for their rights and needs.

One respondent mentioned,

“if our kids go to school, other families do not allow their children to mix with our kids. When we go to the common tubewell to bring clean water other families tease us with bullying”

Behaviour Restrictions

Insufficient breaks and opportunity to communicate outside

Observations at the waste collection and processing revealed that workers do their job under intense heat from the lights, in dirt and dusts. They collect the stinky wastes with their hands, clean the drains by getting down into the drains. They do not have the appropriate safe clothing and no safety measures are taken. They work hard but are not granted adequate short breaks to drink water and food, as supervisors deem it unproductive. They are permitted only a one-hour lunch break during a 10 to 12-hour workday. Waste workers reported that their supervisors believe frequent water consumption would lead to more bathroom breaks, potentially hindering their ability to meet cleaning and collection of waste targets. One worker said

“we do not get necessary safety clothing and products and do not get long break to have lunch or snacks in the work time. Because it hampers our waste collection targets”

The waste workers reported that feeling isolated from the outside world during working hours, as they are prohibited from bringing their cell phones to work. Upon entering the work site or in the garbage truck, their bags are searched by a supervisors to confiscate any phones. This restriction poses significant challenges, especially when their family members are unwell at home. However, if supervisors discover their phones, the workers face verbal and physical abuse.

“Entering the site or getting into the garbage truck, we feel like stepping into another world. During working hours, we are unable to communicate with our family by phone, and if we secretly bring a phone, it gets confiscated.”

Constant Pressure

The Daily production targets

The city roads and drains are divided. They have to clean assigned roads and drains. At the same time, loading and unloading of 10 tons garbage trucks must be completed. Loading unloading of garbage truck is set for us five rounds per day. So it becomes a huge pressure. Workers described the targets as ‘not humanly manageable’ and ‘impossible to achieve.’ They reported that when they are unable to meet the required hourly quotas, which occurs on most days. They are subjected to scolding, shaming in front of others, and reductions in their wages.

Threat of Job loss

All the workers stated that they frequently face the insecurity of being removed from jobs. This potential job loss would leave them in a state of extreme economic vulnerability, prompting them to consistently seek compromises with their supervisors. They mentioned the existence of a complaint box in the city corporation office for reporting physical or verbal abuse, but they refrained from using it due to fear of retaliation, as they believe it could provoke more dangerous and vengeful behavior from their supervisors and conservancy officers. To avoid conflict, the workers reported that they choose to remain silent and avoid arguing with their seniors, especially when the seniors shows their anger. An employee said,

“We perform job under the sky, and when our seniors hit us, either bodily and psychologically, it’s visible to everyone. If we submit a grievence in the suggestion box, it’s not kept confidential. Later, the seniors find out and retaliate, often causing people to lose their jobs. Some of our colleagues filed complaints against the supervisors, and as a result, they were forced to leave.”

Inaccessibility of necessary medication

The workers reported experiencing injuries, various cuts in legs and hands, sore in leg and hands, gastric issues, headaches, body aches, fever and cold. The most frequent injuries include finger and leg injuries from cleaning drains and waste collections. They also mentioned that the medicines and doctors often not available for the cleaners and waste workers.

Wrongfully accusing workers

The respondent also mentioned that when they visit doctors of city corporation, medicines are provided. However, if they visit several times, they claim that they are having medicine with false claims. In addition to that sometimes the spades and other equipment of waste collection are lost, then the workers are rebuked by the supervisors accusing stealing of the equipment. One worker shared,

"When we get injured by a machine or cleaning equipments, we don't receive any medicine. Most of the time, when we visit the doctors or pharmacy of city corporation, we are not welcomed by them. They always accuse us of collecting the medicine on false cause, but we never do that. Why would we collect medicine if not sick? It's not food that we would eat when we're hungry. Moreover, it makes us feel so sad, insulted, and helpless when we're blamed for stealing the cleaning equipment."

Occupational health repercussions and violence

All the workers shared that after returning home from work, they often felt sadness and cried due to physical and verbal abuse from their supervisors. They also mentioned experiencing difficulties with sleep and appetite. Despite feeling 'agitated,' 'angry,' and 'upset,' they chose to remain silent, believing they were expected to endure the abuse without expressing their emotions. Additionally, the workers noted that the supervisors never offered apologies, but they believed that receiving an apology would help alleviate some of their sufferings.

In connection to this, an employee demonstrated his body sores. These were aggravated by a feeling of identity crisis in terms of power in society,

"The main purpose I work in the waste sector is to financial support. However, the supervisors here constantly yell at us. Despite working hard and deserving respectful treatment, we are met with bad behaviour. They take advantage of the fact that we can't do much to stand up to them, which leaves us feeling upset all the time."

Another worker stated that

“The behaviour of supervisors make us sick. We expect that they will encourage us, will behave well and appreciate our efforts. Their rude behaviour make us upset and threatened.”

Employer's Perspective

At the garbage collection and dustbin points visited, all supervisors were male. Each of them expressed the belief that waster workers are often ‘disobedient,’ ‘non-cooperative,’ and ‘unwilling to work’. They claimed that employees are often late in the work, when come, engage in gossip, spend time in the street talking the friends and family members, and are easily distracted by conversations with co-workers. Additionally, they stated that controlling the workers requires shouting at them. A supervisor said,

“These workers lack formal education and come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. It may not be effective to always address them kindly, as they might not respond to gentle communication. Sometimes, raising your voice may be necessary, as kindness alone might lead to greater disobedience.”

Another conservancy supervisor explained,

“Waste workers often face high-pressure working conditions. It is believed that controlling the workers is necessary to maintain productivity. Without strict supervision and raising voices, they may become distracted, which could lead to delays in meeting targets of cleaning roads, drains and garbage points.”

The supervisors denied the occurrence of physical violence against waste workers, acknowledging only verbal abuse. One supervisor remarked, "waste workers were physically abused 10 years ago, but now such incidents are rare. The working environment has improved, and we no longer physically harm them."

However, the supervisors expressed negative perceptions of the waste workers, accusing them of dishonesty and theft. They claimed that workers frequently lied about their health to obtain sick leave and stole items like equipment. A conservancy officer stated,

"They always ask for sick leave even when they are not sick. They lie to us, and we do not trust them."

Views of Government Officials

Four individual interviews (IDIs) and a focus group discussion (FGD) were conducted with government officials to gather further insight into working conditions in the waste sector. These discussions highlighted that greater

priority is placed on structural safety upgrades than on individual security. From the officials' perspective, the occupational work environment has been changing positively since the city corporation was established in 2011, and waste workers are now equipped with safety clothing and equipment. However, waste workers are often reluctant to wear this safety clothing. One respondent explained,

“the city corporation increased its budget for buying the vehicles, safety cloths and equipment for the waste workers. If they do not use them properly, how can we improve?”

Nevertheless, none addressed violence against waste workers seriously. They did, however, acknowledge instances of verbal abuse, attributing this to the large number of workers doing their job in the streets and drainage systems. According to their explanation, officers and supervisors often resort to shouting as a way to maintain discipline. One city corporation official remarked,

“We occasionally are informed about incidents of bodily abuse in the workplace. While our supervisors report such cases to the city corporation high officials, we have not received any official complaints of violence against waste workers. However what happens, this could be because they often work under pressure to maintain discipline within the sites of wastes.

5. Discussion

This study examined waste workers' experiences of workplace violence and the perspectives of other stakeholders in the waste management industry, particularly the city corporation in Bangladesh. The findings indicate that violence against waste workers in the workplace is prevalent in this context. Participants described instances of bodily abuse, including slapping, hitting, and pushing, as well as psychological abuse such as bullying. Besides these, reported mistreatment included wage reductions and continuous threats of job dismissal. Additionally, waste workers expressed reluctance to voice their complaints due to fear of retaliation, such as job termination or retribution from supervisors, and conveyed a sense of powerlessness in addressing or improving their work culture.

The study highlights that the maltreatment of waste workers, in both the society and the working area, has a substantial effect on their physical and mental well-being. Although waste workers find violence unacceptable, stakeholders did not view it as a health and safety concern. This study also

highlighted an important finding: when different organisations considered the importance of occupational health, city corporations focused more on developing infrastructure, such as building more roads, footpaths, and drains. Additionally, the pressure from cleaning targets set with fewer waste workers contributed to a toxic working environment, and city corporation officials acknowledged that when supervisors are unable to handle this stress, they may direct their frustration towards waste workers. As a result, workplace violence appears to be regarded, for waste workers, as an acceptable and effective means of meeting unrealistic daily cleaning and waste-collection targets. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every worker is entitled to a workplace free from violence and discrimination, and Bangladesh has ratified several key international agreements, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). It is the country's responsibility to guarantee a workplace free from violence for all workers, in all sectors.

This research addressed the need for a comprehensive qualitative exploratory study of the practices, experiences, and perceptions of waste workers in Bangladesh, particularly in Cumilla City Corporation. It also provided insight into factors relevant to waste workers', the governance of waste management, and the health-related implications for the city, and identified the waste workers' social and economic crisis alongside their physical and mental health implications. Recent literature from other settings has suggested similar findings: waste collectors face multi-faceted health risks (Hossain et al, 2025) and go through safety challenges (Rahman et al., 2026); waste workers are a non-privileged marginalised group (Miller, J.,2025); and untreated injuries and chronic illnesses among waste workers in Islamabad are common (Sabir and Sharif, 2026).

While this research makes a significant contribution to the literature on occupational health and violence, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted in a single city corporation in Bangladesh and may not fully represent the overall picture of violence in the waste management industry across the country. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, discussions with different key stakeholders (such as workers, supervisors, city corporation officials, and local government divisions) may have led to underreporting of such experiences due to social desirability bias. However, the researcher brings both sociological research expertise and

practitioner knowledge to this field.

Research Implications and Recommendations:

The findings of this study suggest several essential measures for addressing this issue in Bangladesh, and offer policy recommendations to reduce workplace health hazards, improve waste workers' lives, and strengthen the capacity of local government—the City Corporation. First, it is crucial for government officials, city corporation employees, and waste worker representatives to acknowledge the problem; denying its existence will not lead to a solution.

Second, this study highlights the challenges posed by a centrally controlled system, particularly in setting daily waste-collection volume targets. Such a system creates downward pressure on supervisors, which in turn pressures workers to meet unrealistic cleaning targets. To alleviate this pressure, city corporations, government officials, and public representatives need to collaborate in creating a more flexible and reasonable cleaning and waste-collection system. While awareness campaigns are ongoing, governments need to adopt more rigorous policies and facilities to safeguard workers' rights.

Third, within the Bangladeshi context, state authorities, nationally oriented rights advocacy bodies, and employers are advised to draw on these findings in developing appropriate strategies.

Fourth, tackling the issue of abuse against waste workers must be prioritised by the relevant authorities, city corporation officials, public representatives, and national rights-based organisations, in order to shift the attitudes and behaviours of supervisors. Designing and implementing behaviour-change interventions targeting key stakeholders, especially supervisors, is essential to improving the situation.

6. Conclusion:

This article examines the occurrence of violent acts in the workplace within Bangladesh's waste management industry, revealing that waste workers face various forms of violence resulting in both physical and psychological harm. The research explored the humiliation and suffering endured by waste workers in their workplaces. The study has (1) demonstrated evidence of such acts of violence and their impact on health, (2) examined the perspectives of various stakeholders contributing to this occupational health culture, and (3) proposed appropriate actions to address the issue. It suggests strategies for tackling violence against waste workers in Bangladesh's waste management sector, across city corporations and municipalities.

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