

**MORTICIAN'S ENDOWMENT OF FUNERAL RITES IN A
SOCIO-ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW**

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MARCH 2022**

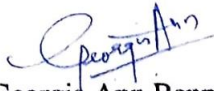


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A Qualitative Dissertation submitted to St. Teresa's College as
partial fulfilment of the requirements of Masters of Arts in
Sociology.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to clarify that the final year project entitled as --- **Mortician's Endowment of Funeral Rites in a Socio-Economic point of view**, is submitted for the award of the **Masters of Arts in Sociology** from St. Teresa's College, Ernakulam – is a genuine work done by **Sarah Maria** under my guidance and supervision from the college and hereby approved for submission.



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March 2022

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the project entitled as “**Mortician’s Endowment of Funeral rites in a Socio-economic point of view**” proposed and presented by *Sarah Maria* is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of **Georgia Ann Benny**. I further declare that this thesis in partial fulfilment of Masters of Arts in Sociology is a genuine work carried out under the University for the award of post-Graduation, associateship or other similar title.

Ernakulam
March 2022


Sarah Maria

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the accomplishment of this venture successfully, many people have bestowed upon us their sincere efforts and guidance upon me.

Primarily, I thank my parents for the whole-hearted support showered upon me for the successful completion of this research. It was indeed a privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility of the curtain raiser to a new area of research under concern to a new subject matter---entitled as 'MORTICIAN'S ENDOWMENT OF FUNERAL RITES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC POINT OF VIEW'. This dissertation also combined with our personal curiosity, motivation to acknowledge and to know more about these individuals and their invalidated importance in the societies.

Secondly, I would like to thank the backbone of our college, our beloved principal Dr. Lizzy Mathew who never fail to ensure the unending support and affection. I'm conveying my heartfelt gratitude to the Head of the Department of Sociology Smt. Elizabeth Abraham.

Then, I extent my heartfelt gratitude towards Georgia Ann Benny, Assistant Professor of Department of Sociology who is my Research Mentor --- the beacon of support and encouragement. Her timely guidance, instructions showered impressive droppings of ideas for researching more on my subject. Even though I had a vision, I needed a battalion to bring this.

Ernakulam

March 2022



Sarah Maria

ABSTRACT

Ancient history of Kerala has limited information about the burial diggers and their social state. The Hindu rites of cremation had their origin in Vedic periods as well as though the deceased were sometimes buried without cremation. During the Vedic period, the Indian society was divided into four castes – Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras and the fifth caste known as Panchamas or Chandalas also known as ‘Outcaste’.

After the arrival of British in Kerala, among the Christians deaths are bewailed with loved lamentations, ware candles, are carried in procession, incense burnt and masses celebrated for the soul, if for that soul, if for that of a rich man for forty days, but for a poor man only one day. Even among the Muslims of Kerala similar burial practices are found.

Burial diggers occupy a low status in the society as they belong to lower castes. They were considered as untouchables. These morticians are often exploited by the upper class without giving them proper remuneration for the work. Burial diggers live a life of fear and stress as they have seen their forefathers dying due to diseases affected from as part of their job. What has changed over the past decades is a change of cultural views towards death. The funeral industry is experiencing changes, that is those changes that are adapting to mega – stylish funerals, organized by event management specializing in funeral services have sprung up in NRI towns.

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CHAPTER – 1
INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROLOGUE

Morticians also known as undertakers or Funeral Directors are people who involved in the funeral rites. Morticians are contacted by family members to arrange for the propagation of the body and planning for the funeral.

1.2 HISTORY OF MORTICIANS

For as long as human beings have cared for their dead, there have been funeral directors.

The ancient Egyptians were possibly the first society to support full-time Funeral Directors or Embalmer with specialist priests spending up to 70 days preparing deceased royalty and nobility for the afterlife. Wealthy Romans relied on their families to look after their remains, but professional mourners were employed to make a fuss of the deceased's passing.

In medieval Britain, an undertaker was originally anyone who performed an 'undertaking'; there were those who undertook weaving as well as those who undertook funerals. Eventually, however, the funeral undertaker was shortened to undertaker, and other trades abandoned the designation to avoid being associated with the funeral profession.

The first undertakers were woodworkers - furniture makers and carpenters - that had the skills required to make a coffin. In rural areas, if they had a horse and cart, they also provided transport, although with most people dying at home, friends and family often carried the coffin to the local churchyard.

As society became more urban, walking funerals became less practical and funeral transportation more necessary. Over time, moonlighting carpenters moved beyond making the coffin and

transporting the deceased. They took on all the elements we consider to be an integral part of the modern funeral director's role, from care and preparation of the body to organising the funeral service.

It is not clear when the funeral director title was first used, but the British Undertakers' Association became the *National Association of Funeral Directors* back in 1905.

The switch from undertaker to funeral director is possibly a reflection of the increased responsibility involved in 'directing' every aspect of the modern funeral service. These days, we have come to rely on the profession's experience and specialist knowledge to ensure that our loved ones get the final send-off they deserve.

It is also an acknowledgement of the care that is taken behind the scenes by a trade trusted with looking after the body of a loved one, from collection to chapel of rest. Author and academic Brian Parsons says the most important evolution in the funeral director's role has been this care of the deceased.

"In 1900 we were pretty hands-off, people died at home, people stayed at home. Now that has completely changed. Death now happens in the institution, whether it's a nursing home, a hospital or a hospice, and the body doesn't rest at home between the death and the funeral."

"The funeral director is now very much the custodian of the body, preparing the body and allowing access to it. Really that's just because society has changed, the way we care for the living has changed and then the way we care for the dead has changed."

Many of the 3,000 independent funeral directors in Golden Charter's UK-wide network are long-standing, family-run businesses that can trace their roots through their local communities. All provide a modern compassionate and professional service, before, during and after the funeral service.

1.3 FUNERAL RITES DURING VEDIC PERIOD

Funeral Ritual According to Pandit includes following ceremonies of giving rice-falls.

1. Having held one's breath (performance pranayama, by taking in a breath slowly through one nostril, holding it and letting it out through the other. The Gayatri Mantra may be said by a brahmans silently to himself to time this correctly; other castes should mentally chant the name of the Lord) and sipped water silently from one's palm (i.e; without saying a mantra out loud)

2. Having taken up water, now, and still holding the water.

3. Beginning with the name and the date (of the ceremony).

4. Apasavyam: (the sacred thread is moved to the right shoulder and left of the body) in the place of death of such and such a person from such and such a gotra.

5. "I will perform the giving of the rice-ball (pindadanam called sava, for the purpose of gratifying the deity presiding over the place of death."

6. The purification of the place (wooden seat or thali where the pinda will be placed) with water (avanejanam), in order to offer worship.

7. Having strewn kusa grass complete with its roots, its points towards the south Holding the pinda in the right hand and placing it on the kusa grass.

8. "I am offering pinda (pinda-danam) called sava (Savanamna), in the particular place of death in the particular family.

9. May whatever I have given come to you.

10. In addition to the pinda, I sprinkle water again, (using dharbal, on the pinda, and offer a strand of wool Curna sutram), chandan (placed with the index finger, the bhrnga—raja flower, a light of sesamum oil, incense of the resin of rala, the fragrant root of utsava, cardamom, an

offering of food consisting of cooked black gram (masa, anna, naivadya) and sacrificial fee daksina- an iron coin. The offerings are made to the pinda with the forefinger of the right hand. A tilak is placed on it, and rice and water are sprinkled over the area (**Indian beliefs and rituals; New Delhi- Usha press**).

1.4 MORTICIANS IDENTITIES

Death was a visible part of everyday life (Lederman 1996. Death was “integrated, through a series of rituals and symbols, into the life of the community” (Lederman 1996:26).

In the field of Anthropology, one main core of subject which is entitled as "The Anthropology of Death and Burial"-- are relevant to our exploration into the topic of death, condition of funeral directors on how they deal with it. The course is explicitly cross-disciplinary and besides anthropology we also explore the topic of death through the lens of Biology, History, Religious studies, Medicine, Law, Philosophy, Sociology, Literature and Art (Jakara.K. Griffin | 2017).

The term mortician is derived from the Roman word mort- (“death”) + mortician. In 1895, the trade magazine. The ‘Embalmers’ monthly put out a call for a new name for the profession in the US to distance itself from the title undertaker, a term that was then perceived to have been tarnished by its association with death.

Funeral Directors are people whom dispose human body and are determined by the social milieu in which one is embedded (Durkheim 2001; Metcalf and Huntington 1991; Turner 1995; Van Gennep 1960).

The definition given by Pine stated that --- undertakers worked to establish standard procedures for embalming and pushed for regulations governing its use and the licensing of its practitioners. The undertakers established associations, published journals, and opened schools dedicated to teaching the skills needed to prepare, display, and dispose of human bodies. These early practitioners also sought to redefine themselves as ‘funeral directors,’ rather than as the decidedly

less professional sounding ‘undertakers.’ In addition to their technical skills, funeral directors differentiated themselves from mere undertakers by developing managerial and counselling skills, and they came to see themselves as providing a service rather than simply selling products (Pine 1975)

1.5 THEORETICAL ANALYSIS ABOUT FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The philosophical theories about morticians raise more questions. In theoretical perspective---Morticians, according to Parsons (2003, p. 76), it is the funeral directors who are one of the primary caregivers to the bereaved, and they are employed as their agents –paid experts, while the client simply issues instructions in the capacity of contractor. Following a death, contact is made with the funeral director to make arrangements that primarily – but not exclusively – centre around disposal of the body therefore, funeral director is often linked to the circumstances of death. (Parsons, 2003, pp. 67–68).

From the book of Arnold.M.Rose entitled as ‘Sociology of occupation—the case of the American Funeral Director’--- defines the sociology of occupations, in the core area of the study of social organization, has occasionally benefited from an interactionist approach, particularly under the leadership of Everett C. Hughes.

In another essay, Robert W. Habenstein, a student of Professor Hughes, applies the point of view to the occupation of funeral director. A social process extends in both directions through time.

Habenstein's article illustrates the manner in which a historical analysis of a process provides improved understanding of its current state. It is interesting to note the application in this essay of Max Weber's concept of the "ideal type" - or, as Howard (P.) Becker has called it, "constructive typology"-as a means of furnishing additional insight into the process of professionalization among funeral directors.

1.6 SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF MORTICIANS

▪ MORTUARY SCIENCE

Mortuary science is the study of deceased bodies, particularly with respect to their burial and the bereavement of their families. The term “mortuary science” is most often used to describe college curriculums that prepare students for work as a funeral director. Of course, mortuary science also involves science. Whether you are strictly an embalmer — the person who prepares the deceased body for burial — or you are a funeral director, you will need to have a variety of practical science skills under your belt. A mortuary science degree will teach you the biology of the human body, how to examine corpses, and how to preserve and prepare the body, either for funeral services or for medical/research purposes. This is a mix of art and science.

Funeral directors are also business managers — they run the daily operations of the funeral home, plan wakes and funerals, and coordinate all the details leading up to those events. They must know how to manage the costs associated with funeral processes, oversee staff, plan the intricate details of the funeral, file important paperwork, and work to ensure each family's needs are met, while remaining compliant with state laws.

1.7 CONDITION OF MORTICIANS – AN OVERVIEW WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KERALA

Over the past century the lower ‘impure’ castes in India have brought their funerary rituals in tune with the Brahminical mainstream, a process known as Sanskritization. But a sense of oppressed identity persists, in which both cosmopolitanism and particularism are played out. Day-to-day funerals are complex politicized performances in which values in Indian society are condensed, manipulated and polarized. Funerals convey multifarious ways of negotiating the

public and the private, the local and the global. In this paper I examine the funeral of Amma, the female eldest (Karnavar) of a wealthy business family belonging to the ritually low Ezhava caste of Kerala. The context of Amma's personal history highlights how Ezhavas, and particularly women, have resisted caste-discrimination, availing themselves of educational opportunities and achieving personal agency. I argue that in Amma's funeral contending ritual modes—anti-casteism, modern consumerism and matrilineal revivalism—neutralize the awesome ritual implications of Sanskritization. The revival of matrilineal ritual seems to reinstate women symbolically as keepers of male migrants' foreign earnings. More generally, if the central problem of life is to cope with or resist oppression, funerary rituals will exhibit a rich repertoire of tradition and innovation that disclose how history is rewritten as a project for the future (**reference from the book 'Mortality- promoting the inter-disciplinary study of death and dying**)

1.8 COVID 19 – THE RISKS FOR FUNERAL DIRECTORS

The COVID-19 pandemic has already caused more than a 100 000 deceased worldwide, causing funeral directors to become overburdened. Consequently, some funeral homes are obliged to keep the deceased in refrigerated trucks until it is possible to bury or cremate them, or bodies are refused because of a shortage of capacity. Yet, to our knowledge, there are no studies currently being conducted on how this affects funeral directors. This is not surprising, as this group has seldom been studied in the past. This is unfortunate, firstly, because this group has been essential on every day of this crisis and secondly because there is cause for health concerns based on the few studies that have been conducted in the past. In this article, we wish to address the possible physical and mental health risks to funeral industry workers based on these few studies worldwide.

Firstly, there is a risk to physical health. Previous studies have shown that funeral directors run the risk of becoming infected when embalming a corpse. Often, they do not know the specific cause of someone's death (e.g; due to professional secrecy) and at times they

do not know the guidelines for treating corpses or follow them strictly. These dangers are especially important with regard to COVID-19, as the virus seems to be very contagious and can survive in dead bodies. Moreover, the guidelines have only recently been introduced and are still evolving.

Secondly, there is also a risk to mental health for funeral directors. Previous studies have shown that traumatic stress events, the number of funerals, the high demands of the job and overexposure to death during their work can all lead to a negative impact on funeral directors' mental health. Furthermore, funeral directors consider it an important aspect of their work to give the best possible emotional and practical support to family members of the deceased.

The COVID-19 crisis is challenging in all these areas. The unusually high death rate during this crisis leads to an overexposure to death and funerals. In combination with the difficult working context due to strict security measures, it will substantially increase the demands of the job.

Finally, there is the constant fear of being infected themselves.

Just as saving people is an essential task, so is burying and cremating people who could not be saved essential. There are different approaches to this crisis around the world, but we all wish to give proper respect to our dead and appropriate support to grieving relatives.

One day, this crisis will end. Hence; It is our duty to be prepared to give the proper care, not only to our healthcare workers but also to funeral directors who have taken care of our deceased relatives, with risk for their own lives. More studies are necessary on funeral directors, and policymakers should take initiatives to support this often forgotten but essential group of caregivers.

1.9 CHANGING TRENDS IN FUNERAL RITES

In a society where commodification is the name of the consumerist game, human relations, family moments, community occasions and everything else come with a price tag. Apparently, even death (Rhea Almeida, Homegrown site; Folo-mojo)

From community to commercial: funerals in central Kerala have seen a gradual change in the last few years, turning a solemn grieving process to a professionally organised event.

Sanjay George Mathew, owner of the event company Coco-Nadu Event Management in Tiruvalla, describes how until a few years ago, “There are always new trends emerging like this, and the same thing is now happening with funerals,” he says.

Mathew continues to note the changes that have emerged in these ceremonies, talking about how transporting the body from the home to the church used to be done in an ambulance, but now the chosen vehicle is a cooled glass case. Black or dark coloured flowers have been replaced with white decorations, some funerals now have themes and matching outfits for the loved ones of the deceased, and sorrow, prayers, and condolence messages are now orchestrated by event management professionals. As it happens with any new tradition, these evolving funerals have garnered mixed reactions. While some commend the power of technology to help connect families across the globe during tough times, others dislike the ostentatious ‘show’ that these otherwise solemn events have turned into. Saniyil – businessman confides that he’s often heard family members criticising the fact that their intimate moments of pain or suffering are being broadcasted for the world to see.

Mathew's counter opines that -- received criticism for cashing in or commercialising someone's death, he maintained that he runs a business and works for money, just like everyone else, and he caters to a growing demand.

In a society where commodification is the name of the consumerist game, human relations, family moments, community occasions and everything else come with a price tag. Apparently, even death.

What has changed over the past decades is a change in a change in the cultural views towards death. The funeral industry is experiencing changes that are re-shaping the death rituals and methods of body disposal. Kerala society is slowly adopting to mega stylish funerals methods of body disposal. Kerala society is slowly adopting to mega stylish funerals organized by event management companies to service this rising demand, several event management companies specializing in funeral services are sprung up in NRI towns.

JUSTIFICATION

From the ancient time onwards, it is the morticians who retrieves the deceased persons and does all the funeral duties but researches on morticians is an untapped area. Though they work as a menial laborer and prepares bodies of the deceased for burial or cremation they are not given enough recognition in society. Mortician cremates the body of the dead whom he has no personal connection. though they do many useful things to society they were not even mentioned in the historical books and records written by a famous Historians. Morticians are just like decomposers who satisfy the world effectively by removing all forms of wasteful content. Through this research, I'm trying to bring them into the limelight of society.

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

It is relevant to know that life history and present state of morticians in-order to have a clear image of their social, political, economic and cultural conditions. Today funerals are becoming as stylish as the jumbo weddings. To serve this demand several event management companies sprung up in NRI towns. Now a days; a death is an occasion for a family re-union as well as an opportunity to show off. So, we are also studying about the changes and trends brought in the rites and rituals. As Morticians belongs to an unorganized group where their problems were never addressed in public. So, it is essential to have a detailed understanding whether the policies by government is enough for the upliftment of this group.

CHAPTER – 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A news article by Mitali Parekh on [dnaindia.com] titled ‘Documenting Vedic Funeral – How the funeral rites practice changes across the globe’ – is based on the thesis – The Survival of Hindu Cremation Myths and Rituals by Aditi Samarth, a humanities professor from U.S.A. Aditi Samarth wanted to study how Diaspora communities retain their traditions through rituals and ceremonies in the final rites of passage. Samarth found the Bernese funeral procession rambunctious with music and dance; whereas the cremation among Morticians Hindus was found to be closely following the Vedic Model. In America funerals were governed by city and state laws and held in funeral homes with distilled rituals.

Another news video titled ‘Life of women working in Shanthi-Kavadam in Trivandrum’—was uploaded in Asianet News Channel on 12th November 2012. As part of the show “Sthree”-- the six women workers in Shanthi-Kavadam, an electric crematorium in Trivandrum is introduced to us. The news video speaks about the societies stigma of women restricted to certain types of jobs like crematorium which at first appearance looks like a park or as garden.

When the crematorium was renewed as Shanthi-Kavadam; seven women were appointed. They got the job through the unit of Kudumbashree [women organization]. They work in shift with a time duration from 1pm – 11pm and from 12pm – 6pm. The working group of women includes --- Sheela, Latha, Vimala, Revathi, Ramani, Chandiri and Sajitha. They speak about how people looked upon them as impure. As a woman they go through pain by seeing death, but these women are compelled to suppress their emotions for money.

These women do the final rites at Kochi crematorium – an article updated on February 8th,2018 in express. This article reveals about Celina, 52-year-old lady who works as a mortician. This article portrait Celina – as an unusual figure working as a mortician. According to her, cremation centers are now virtually her courtyards. Celina moves on her daily life in working as mortician to prepare for the final rites. Celina has been following this routine for the last 11 years.

Celina undergoes through strenuous childhood and traumatic marital lives. She lost her husband at a very young age. So, in order to keep her family sustained, she took up this job. She receives an amount of rupees 1500 as a mortician where she has to pay back to the Municipality fee as rupees 405. Though she admits the very fact of physical disabilities faced while working as a mortician, she was able to sustain her family needs with this job. She receives family support for doing this job. Thus, she beams with pride when people identify her as the lady of crematoriums. Thus, we can conclude that, each job has its own dignity. And it is important for the society to remove all those stereotypes regarding the menial jobs.

An online newspaper, the News Minute 2016, in an article titled ‘I am used to dead bodies’ reported the pathetic life conditions of two women Baby and Celina who were working as morticians. According to this article, their poor economic and family conditions forced them to choose the job of morticians. The article says that working in this field are facing exploitation and they only receive small amount as remuneration for their work. The Hindu Business Line 2018 in an article ‘Death Inc’ reported the changes that are taking place in the system of Indian funeral rites. The report says that for many a Hindu, it is the final wish to die in Varanasi or be cremated at one of its Ghats. In earlier period, the Pandits did all kinds of Poojas to make sure that people are satisfied, but now it becomes a business which helps to earn a

lot of money. As a result of these changes, new websites such as kashimoksham.com are emerged to connect better with clients. In the article 'India's Guardians of death' --- published in the Diplomat on December 14 2017, reported the mindset of society towards the under-takers. The report says that the cremation undertakers perform a sacred function but are considered as untouchables. Even in the twenty first century, these undertakers are considered as untouchables and are not allowed to touch the upper caste people.

Travancore State Manual written by V. Nagam Aiya was a publication of the erstwhile Travancore kingdom, written and published under the statutory command of the King of Travancore. The other book named as Malabar Manual written by the Government of Madras, and originally published in 2 volumes. It is a guide to the Malabar district under the Presidency of Madras in British India, compiled during Logan's Tenure as Collector of Malabar. Not much information was found specifically about the works of grave undertakers but they were mentioned under the lower castes of Kerala. People were mainly divided into 5 castes, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and Panchamas or Chandalas or outcaste as untouchables. Morticians were treated as Untouchables or Chandalas.

'Meet Ramesh Korapathu at Ivor Madham, who lives for souls – we salute' was the title embarked on an article published on October 9th, 2015 by an online newspaper TV News. Ramesh Korapathu has been doing a work of a cremator for twenty years. This article is on the theme of him revealing how he even cremates dead bodies of those who have no relatives or address. He is not bothered about the societal stigmas prevalent towards morticians. He does the funeral rites and posthumous works according to the Hindu religious practice. He is like a guard of the souls. He has cremated legendries like Lohithadas, O.V. Vijayan, Oduvil Unnikrishnan and many more. He has not undertaken this

job not because of financial instabilities, but he considers it as his destiny. He has completed Post Graduation in History and Economics. He quoted that “I like burning dead bodies as well as deaths, otherwise I think it is possible for me to work for many years”. Initially, he was being rejected by his family for committing in working as a mortician, but with a gradual pace of time, he was being accepted by his family members.

Lastly, in my study, I am going to make a deep analysis on morticians with regards to the theoretical study of Jonathan Barret.

CHAPTER- 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

TITLE OF STUDY:-

Mortician's endowment of funeral rites in a socio- economic point of view.

SIGNIFICANCE OF DEALING THE PROBLEMS FACED BY MORTICIANS:-

Being a mortician is not an easy job. Dealing frequently with death and tragedy is the toughest thing about being the mortician; especially during the covid19 pandemic. As they belong to the secluded group their sufferings were never addressed in public. Thus, it is important to have detailed understanding on whether the policies implemented by the government is enough for the upliftment of this group.

OBJECTIVES:-

- To study the socio-psychological and economic conditions of the respondents.
- To examine the changing trends in relation to the performance of funeral rites.
- To understand the role of law-making bodies for the upliftment for the respondents.

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Mortician:-

Mortician also known as Embalmer or Funeral Director; is a person who involve in the funeral rites. He prepares bodies of the deceased for burial or cremations.

FIELD OF STUDY

- Universe – Morticians in Kerala Society.
- Sampling size – The population size is limited to 10 morticians.
- Sampling strategy – Sampling strategy employed in this study is convenient sampling.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS USED IN RESEARCH

✚ Primary data collection method.

- I'm conducting my research through telephonic interview schedule with help of questionnaires that focus primarily on the objectives of the research. Case study method will also be applied to my research for detailed understanding.

✚ Secondary Data Collection Method.

- My data collection is wheeled through data sources collected from newspaper, historical books, magazines and social media.

TOOLS AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

- Telephonic Interview Schedules.
- Case Study Methods.

CHAPTER - 4
CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDIES

CASE-STUDY 1

RAMANI

Ramani is a 63-years old woman who works in the Shanthikavadam crematorium, Thiruvananthapuram as an assistant cremator and cleaner. She is married and has three children. Her husband is suffering from cardio-vascular disease and he is unable to go for work. Earlier, he also did some petty jobs but now, Ramani is the only bread-winner of the house.

Mrs. Ramani has two daughters, and all of them are married. She has a son who does not have permanent job, but has assisting his mother in daily expenses. Ramani said that her family went through a financial crisis as she has to spend major portion of her income for her husband's treatment and for their daughter's marriage. When asked about the job satisfaction, she said- I enjoy doing this job but the salary is insufficient.

Ramani got this job through Kudumbashree until 13-years ago. She has mentioned about the hostility shown by her family and relatives initially to the job at the crematorium and later how it turned to sanction.

Ramani works in the first shift with two others, they clean the floor after the cremation rituals are done and they also assist Udayan (cremator) for the cremation work. Most of the records in the crematorium are handled by Ramani and she does it with all the enthusiasm.

And she is the one who took the initiative to send a request to the corporation to allot pension for the crematorium workers. But all her fears are about her increasing age and the financial insecurities amidst this pandemic.

CASE-STUDY 2

VIMALA

Vimala is a worker in the Shanthikavadam – a public crematorium in Thiruvananthapuram. And this 64 – year old woman is the present association secretary of the crematorium. Vimala is a spinster and she lives with her relatives. She is a seventh standard drop-out; as her parents could not afford her studies. She lost her mother at a very young age and her father left her after his second marriage.

As per co-worker's remarks – Vimala is a secluded person though, she is the one who is always stay bold, courageous and responsible. At first, when asked her questions – she was reluctant to answer but co-operate with me. She has mentioned that during the initial days of joining the work, she was confused as there was no one was there to guide them and to give a brief about the functioning of their job. But gradually with a pace of time, they understood the pattern and the functioning of their job.

For the past 15 years of her experience, she has been the one who took up the initiative to inform to their concern authorities (Trivandrum cooperation authorities) about their grievances and their needs with respect to their job. Even during this pandemic, they have directly written a grievance letter to Chief Minister of Kerala to increase their wage.

Vimala co-ordinates and supervise other women co-workers. The task coordinating other members seems so easy for her as all other fellow works respect her orders. She has been suffering from some age-associated diseases like arthritis and cataract. When I had a conversation with her, I understood that, she enjoys her life at its fullest while being single and gives a satisfied remarks about job satisfaction and income satisfaction amidst this pandemic.

CASE-STUDY 3

UDAYAN

Udayan who is 46-years old is the main cremator in the Shanthikavadam and he has been working there for the last 5 years. Before taking up this job, he has done several other jobs. From the childhood itself he had a service-oriented mind.

During the school days he was a member of scouts and guides and he was awarded as a best volunteer for his selfless services. Udayan mentioned that, he could not work to his full potential while doing other jobs because he always desired to do some humanitarian jobs.

He also made a remark that, he has always recognized a stigmatized approach against the morticians and towards their work; and when he took up this job as his profession --- he has faced many stigmatized inequalities and attitudes from the society. Later on, he himself observed the positive approach toward them.

This recognition gave him satisfaction and motivation to indulge more into this dignified job. Udayan shared with us the story of the Legendary king Harichandra as per the Hindu Mythology who had to work in the cremation ground due to his selfless commitment and truthfulness towards mankind.

He is receiving a good amount as salary for his work, which is enough to secure his family in a better life. He is the only earning member of his family, and his family includes his wife and children.

Even though the crematorium authorities for years are not taking special care of the worker's health; but he is of the opinion that his health is in good condition.

When we critically evaluates his statement; this itself shows how the male workers are gaining all privileges and how much they are ignorant about other co-female worker's health.

But the situation has immensely changed during this pandemic, where the concern authorities from the co-operation are given emotional financial support to the women workers without showing wage-based gender biases.

Udayan was the one who provided a detailed description about the functioning and the importance of huge crematoriums in city like Trivandrum. He said about the life in cities, and how pollution and population congestion affect the lives of people in Trivandrum. This in turn made the Trivandrum co-operation to lay down the foundation of Shanthikavadam crematorium.

CASE-STUDY 4

SAJITHA

Sajitha is 45-years old woman working in the Santhikavadam, Thiruvananthapuram. She is the youngest amongst all the workers and she came as a replacement for a woman who left the job. Sajitha discontinued her studies after failing in tenth class. Later, she was forced to work as a tailor due to the economic crisis.

At a very young age, she got married to an auto-rikshaw driver. Her husband's income was insufficient to satisfy their household needs. Her family, included her husband's diseased mother and their three children. So, when kudumbashree offered her a job in the public crematorium she accepted.

During the first days of the job, she was unsatisfied. As a new-comer she didn't receives a warm welcome from other co-workers who were working for many years.

Gradually, she got along with them and now she is a helping hand for the aged workers. Sajitha takes care of the first aid in the shanthikavadam in case of medical emergency during this pandemic. Now she needs financial support as her elder daughter is studying abroad. So Sajitha is working overtime to make money for it.

Her daughter holds a stigmatized approach towards this job and considers her job as inferior, where the daughter has promised her mother that, when she starts earning, she will not allow her mother to do this job.

Amidst, these uncertain times, Sajitha now feel the same, because she opines that the Government of Kerala and the people are not bothered to evaluates how pathetic is their living.

Because the mainstream society and the concerned state authorities are not articulating the necessary laws and policies for these people. And they have to cremate more than 45 dead bodies each day.

Sajitha was satisfied with the job earning 10,000 per month but now she and her co-workers couldn't afford that amount to meet the household needs during this pandemic.

CASE-STUDY 5

REVATHY

Revathy is a 64 years old woman working in the Shanthikavadam, Thiruvananthapuram. She belongs to a fishing community in the Valayathura, a fishing port. She is living with her husband who is a fisherman. Earlier, she was fishmonger in the Valayathura fish market and later when she got the job in public crematorium, she stopped selling fish. Now she lives in her own house with her husband and they don't have children.

When she joined the Shanthikavadam, she had to go through a mental trauma as the corpse brought back the memories of their child whom she lost at a very young age. In such a situation, she even thought of leaving the job but due to her husband's support, she continued.

She is a woman with a great willpower and she is considered to be the perfectionist by the co-workers. She also provides some financial assistance for the co-workers' children's education because she loves children.

As a job in Shanthikavadam is in shifts, the rest of the times she worked as a caretaker in the nearby houses. Now as her health conditions are getting worse due to this pandemic, she is about to quit the job in Shanthikavadam and to join a small initiative of processing half cooked chappattis in her neighborhood.

Her positivity towards life is inspiring to us even though she had to go through many difficulties in her life.

CASE-STUDY 6

CHANDIRI

Chandiri is 64 years old woman, who is a spinster is the president of their kudumbashree unit. She has been working in the shanthikavadam for more than 13 years. She was a menial labor before entering into this job.

She is an independent woman earning her livelihood herself. She has only two brothers and no other relatives, but surprisingly these brothers are ignorant of taking care of her.

Hence, she has molded herself to be independent woman by taking part in this job and is living in a small rented house – meeting all the expenses with the salary she earns from this job. Her life experiences mold her to be self-reliant and as a strong lady.

Her other traumatic life experiences made her to realize the fact of living for oneself and building up less expectations from the society. As she was an unmarried woman, brothers were unwilling to look after her. This realization made her to took up this job, to make herself economically independent.

Before having this job as a mortician, she engaged herself in several other jobs like domestic household labors functioned as a cleaning staff in some government offices. Finally, she entered into this job as a funeral director or as a mortician.

At the beginning, she received an amount of 1,500 per month which was barely sufficient to meet the daily expenses. For the past 6-7 years, they receive an amount of 10,000 as a monthly income.

Even during these uncertainties as any other co-workers in the shanthikavadam, she is not satisfied with this sum amount. Being the president of the kudumbashree unit.

She has presented a memorandum before the Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram corporation before the covid out-burst but the painful fact was that no action has been taken the government. The other major issues which concern them is about the wage and about the occasional leave.

Before the covid19 pandemic, if they take a leave for a day, they do not receives an amount for that day. Therefore, they were forced to work all days in a month without taking sufficient leaves.

The other major crisis was that, they do not receive any allowances or incentives such as pension, PF and so-forth. She is also of the opinion that – there is always an invisible inequality between male workers and female workers, especially regarding tips and bonus they receive from the relatives of the deceased people.

As the main cremator, Udayan has mentioned about the lack of health care facilities provided to the co-workers. But Chandiri is not concerned about her age or health issues, because she is a dedicated woman and gives her fullest effort for proper functioning of her job she is doing.

She is the one who has witnessed the changing approaches and attitudes of societies during the past 14 years. She observed that there is positive acceptance, incorporation and respecting these jobs with more dignified outlook. Though there are many limitations and struggles in this job, she enjoys with utmost pleasant smile.

CASE-STUDY 7

LATHA

Latha is the most vibrant woman among the workers who is 48 years old has been working in shanthikavadam for 13 years. Among all the other women and co-workers, it is Latha who is leading an enthusiastic life.

Being an employed woman, she manages her daily domestic chores all alone. She was studious from childhood but, could complete only pre-degree. Later, she was married to auto-rickshaw driver who later manages her. They are happy with what they have.

Before under-taking the job as a cremator, she has done several other inferior labour works. When she expressed her views on health incentives provided for them, she opined that there were governmental initiatives on health only during the spread of contagious diseases like Nipah, which became disastrous disease among Keralites.

Now, during this pandemic, they were given annual leaves and other considerations to maintain their health. Since she is a dedicated woman, she didn't give priority to any sort of precautions initiated by the government against government though she fulfills her all covid19 protocols. The only remedy she follows is to keep her body and environment clean.

She is also an active participant in politics. She contested for the panchayat elections. Initially she received an amount of thousand per month, but now for the past few years, it has been raised to ten thousand per month. But this amount is not sufficient for satisfying their household needs amidst this pandemic times. She is getting full support from her family for doing this job.

The problem faced by the women workers in the shanthikavadam is more or less the same. One of the major problems that she points out is that they did not receive their salary for the past two to three months. She stressed on the inequalities prevailing among women and men in this field.

According to her opinion, men receive a bonus of thousand while women receive a sum of hundred. There is also a move on the part of men restricting women from receiving this amount. She faces all the challenges with a positive approach.

CASE-STUDY 8

VINOD

Vinod is a 47 years old man working in the shanthikavadam for the past ten years. He is a native of Thiruvananthapuram. He has three daughters and a wife living with his aged parents. After his completion of pre-degree, he started doing many jobs to sustain his family. He worked as a labor in MHT Company, Chennai.

He is the only income earner in his house. Earlier he had no ambitions to achieve in his life. The death of his brother became a turning point in his life. Because of lack of property and money, he faced a troublesome situation to bury the dead body of his brother. After this incident occurred, he worked hard to earn a property.

In the year 2000, he entered into this job in shanthikavadam as a cremator. He receives initially an amount of fifteen thousand per month and also receives another incentive as a tip and bonus from the MHT Company and from the relatives of the deceased.

He very well supports and coordinates with Udayan who is another co-worker in shanthikavadam. They both are the main cremators of the shanthikavadam. He is the only cremator who bury the bodies with woods in a traditional way as per the demand of the customers.

He is very much passionate about the job, which was once proven by a true incident. Once a fire broke out, he was trapped in the room where he got suffocated from the huge fumes but courageously, he escaped from the incident. Still, he sticks on with the same job due to his strong willpower.

Due to his strong passion, he didn't bother about the societal notions about this job. He deeply understood about the reality of life. He is also concerned about the environmental issues. As he receives this job from his ancestors, he does this job wholeheartedly. He wishes to continue this job throughout his life.

CASE-STUDY 9

SHEELA

Sheela is a 47 years old woman who became part of the member of shanthikavadam as being a member of kudumbashree unit. She is married woman having three children and her husband who is a daily wage worker. She has been working in shanthikavadam for more than 11 years.

She is the bread winner of her family, because her job is a relief for her family to manage financial assistance. She shared an experience of fire explosion that happened at the cremation centre. But even during those difficult times she faced all challenges with immense courage. She explained about the sewage disposal system.

As a member, she too have experiences which has revealed the stigmatized approach towards these people. Early, her husband shows some uninterest for working her in the crematorium. But later on, he understood the fact that each job has its dignity.

She shared awkward where the relative of the deceased person who gave her bonus with left hand and she as a believer of superstitious practices viewed as kind of negligence. She is a strong lady with huge will-power and determined mind. She also criticized the government for not providing the needful incentives.

CASE-STUDY 10

BABY

Baby is the famous cremator in Ernakulam district, Kochi --- who is an icon of women empowerment. She is a 57-years old and has been doing this job for the last 30 years. She is doing the work of a cremator in the church St. Basilica Lady of Our Snow famously known as Manjumatha church located at Pallipuram. She inherited this job from her mother Annakkutty who was also a mortician in Manjumatha church.

It was baby's family members who had done this work as an ancestral job where at the beginning it was her uncle who performed the job and later after the death of her uncle, it was taken by her mother Annakkutty. After the death of her mother, Baby took up this job. Currently, she is the only cremator in that church. She is a widow and now she is living with her sister's children.

For economic independence, baby is still doing this job though this job has many challenges. She is continuously receiving pressure from different facets of society as the natives of that place believed that this is to be a job done by men folks. She has received and is receiving monetary benefits from the church. She receives an amount of thousand for each cremation work.

She does many other church-related works such as cleaning and many other works considered by the society as inferior. She has no other member to support her in doing those works. The members of the church believe that she is receiving good monetary benefits so that she is continuing with this job.

Initially when she took up this job, she faced many challenges from the society because it is a male centric society. Church members are not too considerate about her. Baby being the female worker in the church, because they think that the earning that she makes from the church, is enough for a moderate living. Initially, baby was excluded from the community programs but gradually with the pace of time, society

accepted her as no one else is there to replace her in doing grave digging. Gradually, with the intervention of media, who published about her activities to the outside world, which made her famous in her locality and also in the district of Ernakulam.

Later on, many media persons also approached her to understand her biography which later on created disturbances for her though partially it made her famous. But this continuous intervention of media started defaming her sisters' children with whom she is living at present so baby also considers the continuous intervention of media to be a burden for her in the society. She is a bold woman who is self-reliant.

CHAPTER- 6
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The case studies were held through focus group discussion. The people I met through google meet, immensely contributed their part by explaining their suffrages along with the functioning of their job. For the studies of shanthikavadam, the whole team contributed their part of answering extensively. This helps to understand their situations in an in-depth manner. Major share of workers were women, which gives immense joy to see how much they were empowered financially. One among the co-workers like Sajitha and Vinod both have stated that --- amidst the pandemic they all were severely hit by First wave, Second wave and by Third waves of pandemic like any other common humans.

Amidst these uncertainties, they were supposed to work. Because their job of cremating bodies was necessary during the first wave and second wave of covid 19 pandemic. They have stated that during the second wave of covid they were supposed to bury 45 dead bodies per day. It was a hectic job, because of which they couldn't make use of their recreational time. The covid has break down them emotionally. Still, they strive to be committed to their work.

People of shanthikavadam is of the opinion that there still prevails a lack of implementation and allocation government policies for their upliftment. They have argued that the government authorities of Kerala are ignorant about their pathetic state of social-economic-psychological conditions of morticians in our society.

From the Vedic period onwards we can view through the historical texts describing how people who have done this job were segregated and marginalized from the mainstream of societies. They were generally termed and belong to Shudras from Shudra communities. It is the morticians who retrieves the deceased persons and does all the funeral duties, but they lives and their pathetic societal status is an untapped areas of interest.

Hence, the discriminatory and stigmatized approaches towards them should be removed from the regressive mindset of major share of people. They are to be considered as individuals and their work should also be treated with huge respect. Each one of us should foster inclusion, acceptance, and recognizing them as individuals. Their presence and their job require huge respect and the society should give them proper recognition

CHAPTER-6
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

- Most of the morticians under my case study belongs to the age group 40 to 65 years.
- Out of the ten cases, 7 of them are married and live along with their partners and their children.
- One among of them is a widow and the other two are spinsters.
- Seven of them own their own houses and two of them live in a rented house and one lives with her relatives.
- Most of them do not have even primary education.
- The highest educational qualification attained among the members is pre-degree.
- All of them belong to a poor economic background and most of them took up this job to attain a financial stability.
- Some of them are the only source of income in their families.
- The present social status of the workers has been affected by this pandemic.
- Each day, they have to deal with 45 dead bodies during the second wave of the covid pandemic and is so hectic for them.
- Compared to pre-covid times, they are not even receiving the needful annual leaves for maintaining their health.

- The government officials and the society which is not giving them appropriate recognition for their work.
- When compared to the male morticians, women are facing more mental pressure and depression.
- The social status of the workers has improved a lot when compared to the initial status which was low.
- Financial independence gives a woman more respect in the society.
- Most of them had done many petty jobs like tailoring, plumbing, household labors, etc, before taking up this job.
- From the historical period, cremation works were reserved for men especially belonging to a lower section of society but now the pattern has been changed which has included female workers.
- They have good working conditions compared to earlier days.
- They have access to all basic requirements such as restrooms, break times and other required things needed for a crematorium worker.
- During the initial days, they had no access to technological advancements but now the records have been computerized.

- Each cremator has to work for three to four hours daily.
- They also engage in other part time jobs after their work.
- Along with the salary, they also receive an extra payment and bonus from the relatives bringing the dead bodies to cremate.
- But the women workers receive less than what the male workers receive which clearly depicts the gender inequalities and discriminations existing in such workplaces.
- The workers are provided with provisions for re-creation facilities.
- The workers are provided with uniform. But they are not provided with any other extra requirements according to their needs.
- Many of the workers indulge themselves in part time jobs for increasing their standard of living
- This is because very few workers are the only income source in their houses. Amidst these uncertain times, if they need to meet their incurring heavy expenses, they need to incorporate other labor-works.
- During these pandemic times, the annual amount of 10,000 seems not enough to lead a healthy life.
- The pandemic had brought a significant amount of insecurities among these workers with regards to their payments.

- It is not sufficient to meet their daily chores.
- From the Vedic period onwards, people used to treat this job as an inferior one which is supposed to be done by the lower section of the individuals.
- This pattern can be seen among these workers because most of them are belonging to the lower section of the society.
- From my case study, it is found that most people don't seem to get an interest to pursue this field of a career.
- This itself vividly shows how stigmatized these jobs are still prevailing in this society.
- From my study, it is very clear that there lies a huge gender discrimination prevailing in jobs like these.
- Majority of the male population are receiving comparatively higher income and bonus than the female workers.
- During this pandemic, we can observe that many people have been affected by financial crises which made their lives still stand.

- Likewise, these people also suffered a lot during the first wave by cremating more than 45 dead bodies daily without even considering their health conditions.
- These people are not recognized by the government, and therefore, there is a lack of proper implementations in the planned programs with regard to the working conditions of the morticians in and around the crematorium.
- The women morticians are receiving a sum of ten thousand rupees while the male cremators in the shanthikavadam earns an amount of fifteen thousand monthly.
- Some of them have inherited the job from their ancestors whereas others voluntarily joined for this job.
- Difference was seen in the pre-cremation rituals based on religion, caste and regions.
- All of them work in the unorganized sector so that they have no works security.
- Even though the work is challenging, workers have incorporated themselves to work with more enthusiastic approach.
- They have to work all the day because there is no provision for holidays, entertainment and leisure which is completely absent in their lives.

- The women workers in the Shanthikavadam coordinated by the Kudumbashree unit and the male workers are recruited by the Chennai based MHT Company.
- There is no pension scheme for those who retire from the cremation works.
- The salary that they are earning is not sufficient for taking loans or other financial assistance.
- Debts are one of the reasons for the workers to stick on to this job.
- They do not believe in superstitions; they are more empirical.
- They believe that we should only fear the alive beings and not the dead bodies.
- The under-takers are concerned about the environment. They give much priority to cleanliness and are eco-friendly in nature, as they claim.
- Most of the cremators first faced rejection from their family members when they joined for this job.
- Gradually, their notion of considering these jobs as inferior one was later accepted with huge respect.

- The only query, these individuals raised is about--- the inadequate government policies for the upliftment of the cremators.
- They have submitted a letter directly to the Chief Minister of Kerala, but didn't receive rightful response or no response.
- The state government and the concerned medias are ignorant to recognize, to include, to respect these people and their suffrage faced during these difficult times.
- The media journals fail to acknowledge their issues and worries to the outside world.
- There are no adequate government policies for the upliftment for the cremators.
- The cremators are not aware as much about the policies and programs which benefit them.
- Most of the cremators are not bothered about their health. They are unaware and do not bother about their usage of safety measures like wearing masks, gloves, etc, while cremating.
- But now, because of this pandemic, they are cautious about their health.

- The cremators in the organization do not face any sort of sexual harassment from the male workers.
- During the period of spreading contagious diseases like Nipah virus, it becomes a threatful situation for the cremators.
- There are two types of cremating methods, the first is of using wood, which has been used since Vedic age onwards.
- The new method is of electorial crematorium using electricity.
- In short, when we go through the historical texts, it is clear that there still lies a huge demarcation between male and female workers.

CHAPTER-7
CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

Throughout history, one of the biggest taboos that we, as a society have faced, is that the concept of death. Even in India, death is seen as tragedy and all those associated with it are seen as unclean and impure. While for the family, this is temporary, for the people who handle the bodies daily, it was a permanent stigma, making them 'untouchables' during the Vedic period. In modern era, the stigmatized approach has been removed to a huge extent but these people are more often ignored by the mainstream societies and the concern authorities.

Within the cultural context of India, it seems that individuals rarely acknowledge the morticians. Morticians spend much of their working hours with the dead. Society fails to acknowledge much of the psychological distress they experience. Stress is an inevitable component of life, and comes in variety of shapes and forms, with varying prominence, due to organizational focus shifting to enhance well-being and focus on increasing productivity among workers.

Another inevitable acute stressor in our lives is death. Death is the only certainty of life, brings with it the idea of loss, grief, anger, depression and so on all of which irreversibly alter us. This research paper aims to therefore understand these repercussions on a specific population of individuals, morticians, a large chunk of whose everyday stress itself is the handling of death, loss and grief. But at the same time morticians face social stigma.

It is thus important that we study not only the presence, but also the intensity of such stigma as well as understand if and what sort of coping mechanisms are employed by the workers. This will better help to map how the support systems required for them to thrive and succeed at their jobs.

CHAPTER – 8
SUGGESTIONS

SUGGESTIONS

I, hereby put forward some suggestions to improve the lives of morticians. They are mentioned as follows

1. Improving and considering the mental health

As they are constantly involved in the burial activities, they have a chance of falling into mental depression. Hence the NGOs along with Government should provide them medical assistance and should provide them with healthier working conditions along with support them financially.

2. Removal of social stigma

Each job has its own dignity. Whether it is sewage cleaning, domestic labours, plumber or even whether it is a mortician job. The above stated jobs are often seems to hesitate to provide the needful respect and recognition. Thus, these jobs should also be considered with equal standard. Therefore, such stereotypes should be changed and we should understand the very fact of being considered and included to the so-called “standards of job”.

3. Proper waste management

The workers are untrained and unaware in handling with hazardous wastes. They are discarding wastes into landfills, ponds thus potentially contaminating ground water and soil. Thus, they should be trained for the proper waste disposal system. Because the pandemic has brought a new awareness to maintain a hygiene lives to stay healthy.

4. Participation of NGOs

Active participation of NGO Agencies is necessary. Should enact some awareness programmes on health, cleanliness, ensuring better living conditions for the morticians. NGOs should actively conduct awareness classes for maintaining proper health amidst this pandemic.

5. Implementation of Government policies

Government should take the initiation to implement programmes and measures to ensure the betterment of morticians or funeral directors. Government along with NGOs should cordially join in the process of directors. Government should bring-forth favourable policies that must accelerate

- a) Subsidized loan facilities
- b) Need for the salary expansion amidst this pandemic.
- c) Pension schemes to increase the social and economic status of workers in the cremation centres.

6. Protection of female workers in the cremation centres

The concerned authorities of the organization must make sure that the female cremators are treated well.

7. Functions to be performed by the concern authorities of the cremation centre.

The concerned authorities of the organization should assure job security especially to female funeral directors. Organization should also grant maternal leaves. The organization should forefront child care facilities to minimum truck load of work for the female cremators. It should envision certain provisions to provide them with medical allowances. They should also be given training in electrical crematorium.

8. Counselling practices

To ensure informed decisions and procedures within the crematorium and also among the workers.

9. Both government and organizations should identify all the awareness strategies for morticians. They should monitor whether cremators are provided basic infrastructural facilities.

10. Morticians must be permitted with pension schemes by the concerned authorities of the organization they are working with.
11. As the work of morticians is a service to the society, which should be redefined by providing the proper recognition by the society.
12. Attempts has to be made to redefine their work by shifting its emphasis from body handling to providing important and necessary service for the living.
13. Amidst this pandemic their salary should be increased in order to cope up with the difficult situations.
14. Morticians should practice role professionalism to overcome social stigmas.

In conclusion, society should change their dimensions of considering morticians as untouchable, irrelevant excluded groups, because they too are humans with same emotions and dignity.

CHAPTER - 9
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CHAPTER-10
APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Online Interview Schedule for collection of data from crematorium

- + Name
- + Gender
- + Age
- + Working hours
- + Nature of residence (rented home/ own home/ residing with cousin relatives)?
- + How did you come across this job, whether by lineage, or whether through any other organization?
- + Have you taken any special training before joining this job?
- + How many years have you been in this profession?
- + Is your job permanent?
- + Whether have you all engaged to any substitutive part-time jobs?
- + Did you all receive any incentives or pension as part of this job from government or any other organizations?
- + Will the customers provide you any additional money for your work?

- # Are your basic needs satisfied through the salary you receive from your job?
- # Are you a member of any organization or association? If any mention the organizations name?
- # What was your family's response on taking up this job in the crematorium?
- # Have you ever gone through discrimination from the society for performing this job?
- # During this pandemic period, have you faced any health issues due to the hectic workload?
- # Does the constant sight of dead bodies and mourners create any mental anxieties and stress in you?
- # Are you facing any emotional and psychological illness?
- # Do you feel contentment in doing this job?
- # Which all types of cremation methods have been used in the crematorium (whether it is an electric cremation or wood or grave digging)?
- # Do you cremate the dead bodies of people from different religious and cultural backgrounds?
- # Are your children interested in taking up the job after them?
- # Are you getting necessary basic amenities like food, sanitation facilities, clean drinking water in the workplace amidst this pandemic time?

- # Have you faced any sort of abuse or maltreatment in the workplace?
- # Does any governmental officials or other organizational authorities come for inspections in your workplace?
- # Do you follow the traditional funeral rites while cremating the bodies?
- # Have you noticed any changing trend in the funeral rites?
- # Are you keeping the proper record of the cremated bodies and their causes of deaths using computerized techniques?
- # Do you follow universally approved methods of keeping yourself clean and safe while doing this work?
- # Do you think that the job of a mortician is gender based?
- # Do you have a stigmatized approach if it is impossible for the women section to perform these works?
- # Do the female relatives also accompany the dead bodies to the funeral grounds these days amidst the pandemic time?
- # Does your cremation technique have any bad impact on the environment?