

**SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION OF WASTE COLLECTORS  
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY:  
A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO WATTALA PRADESHIYA SABA IN SRI LANKA**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL COMPLETION  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AND PUBLIC  
POLICY OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

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**DECEMBER, 2013**



**70825**

## ABSTRACT

In any society waste collectors play an important role in the solid waste management system. Despite the invisible and significant social and economic benefits that they generate to the society, waste collectors are still socially excluded.

This study is to find out the social, economic and political reasons for the social exclusion of waste collectors and their impact on their health and safety; analyze their major issues in-depth; and provide possible recommendations to overcome those identified problems.

The Wattala Pradeshiya Sabha was selected for this study. Purposeful sample of 30 waste collectors who are employed at the Wattala Pradeshiya Sabha were selected.

Qualitative research methods as well as quantitative research methods were used to collect data for the study as this study mainly aims to analyze socio economic factors and social exclusion as well as occupational health and safety issues of the waste collectors. The main instrument of data collection for the study was a pre-coded structured interview schedule and case studies; key informant interviews (KIIs); and personal observations which were used to find out economic, political and social reasons of social exclusion of waste collectors.

The identified economical issues were inadequate income, financial mismanagement and insufficient job security. The major social issues were lack of social recognition and discrimination. The main political issues were politicization of the industry, lack of freedom and provision of workers' rights.