

*Artigo Científico*

## **ASPECTS OF HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE OF CATCHING OF GARBAGE AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE CITY OF POMBAL-PB - BRAZIL**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to contribute to a better understanding of the relationship of garbage collectors in the city of Pombal, especially those who live directly from the landfill, their thoughts, attitudes, and especially to evaluate aspects of health and quality of life, including their families. In this context, it was possible to observe the way of life, housing, education, income sources, besides the trash sold, and reported by the major diseases involved. It was also studied for their inclusion as members of the Association of Collectors of Recyclable Material of Pombal – ASCORMP an entity that aggregates all the families involved with the survival from the trash and recyclables. The results obtained in this research were of fundamental importance to enable the ASCORMP better management of associations, trade waste, avoiding middlemen and possible future training to those involved, and propose alternatives for how to deal with the polluted environment, aiming to provide quality life and health.

**Keywords:** Garbage, family, quality of life, health.

## **ASPECTOS DE SAÚDE E QUALIDADE DE VIDA DOS CATADORES DE LIXO E SUAS FAMÍLIAS NA CIDADE DE POMBAL-PB**

**RESUMO:** O presente estudo teve como objetivo principal contribuir para uma melhor compreensão na relação dos catadores de lixo da cidade de Pombal, especialmente àqueles que vivem diretamente do lixão, suas reflexões, posturas, e, sobretudo, avaliar os aspectos de saúde e qualidade de vida, inclusive de seus familiares. Neste contexto, foi possível observar o modo de vida, condições de moradia, escolaridade, fontes de renda, além do lixo comercializado, e principais doenças relatadas pelos próprios envolvidos. Foram também estudados quanto a sua inserção, como associados da Associação dos Catadores de Material Reciclável de Pombal - ASCAMARP, entidade que agrega todas as famílias envolvidas com a sobrevivência a partir do lixo e de produtos recicláveis. Os resultados obtidos com a pesquisa foram de fundamental importância para possibilitar à ASCAMARP uma melhor gestão de associativismo, comercialização do lixo, evitando atravessadores e, possibilitar futuros treinamentos aos envolvidos, além de propor alternativas de como lidar com o ambiente poluído, visando proporcionar qualidade de vida e saúde.

**Palavras-chave:** Lixo, família, qualidade de vida, saúde.

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## INTRODUCTION

From the last decades, the environmental issue has become a worldwide concern. Nations around the world recognize the emergence of environmental problems. However, the complexity of environmental problems requires more than punctual measures that seek to solve problems from their effects, ignoring or ignorant of its causes (DIAS, 1992). It is noted in this discussion, as a consequence of this process, the emergent of the population of garbage collectors, as a phenomenon on the scale of social exclusion calls on-hand in society, caused by the established pattern of consumption and urban solid waste generation.

The waste is the raw material out of place. The way a society treats is dependent of a cultural issue. In Brazil tones of garbage are thrown open, without any care.

With increasing of population and deployments in factories or industries of disposable package, the country has been considered to be potential environmental polluter. The scavenging on landfill represents a lifestyle choice for millions of Brazilians. Many know no other way to live. Having been raised in shacks around the garbage. These groups get their income by scavenging for recyclable waste which is sold to scrap dealers.

The objective of this study was to evaluate forms of garbage collection as well as commercialization, associations, verifying the living conditions and health problems of the families of scavengers of the city of Pombal - PB.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The survey was conducted among the members of ASCORMP, site of action of scavengers, located in Vida Nova Boulevard in the city of Pombal - PB, and in the very city dump, which is located approximately 05 km

from headquarters. In the period from March 05 to April 10, 2008.

The research was characterized in respect of health and quality of life of garbage collectors who live at the dump, the data was through individual interviews, using semi-structured questionnaire previously prepared, having 10 objective questions, through a script, focusing on the quality of life and health aspects of each of the scavengers that there founded so getting all the features experienced by pickers and their families.

The sample reached the number of 22 scavengers that operate between 6 months and 10 years in the garbage collector activity.

It was used documentation through photographs of technical visits;

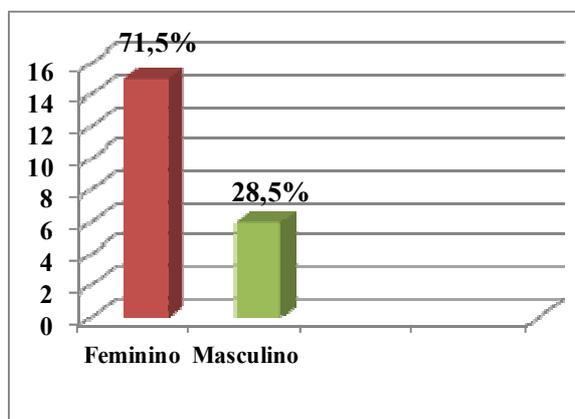
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Garbage Collectors of Pombal by sex

Respondents were men and women 's, and the results obtained in the research made possible the presentation of various aspects of the 22 scavengers from their families, among which the genre, so it was possible to identify the highest percentage for females, over 70%, as shown in Figure 1.

According to Silva (2010) evaluating an study of occupational risks and implementation of proposals for health education to collectors of recyclable waste from the landfill Parnaíba-PI has been found that there is a predominance of males with 30 respondents representing 67% of total sample.

According to Lourenço cited Magera (2003), in a research paper on the street, says that the collector is an individual male (almost 80%), which mostly migrate from North and Northeast Brazil for the Southeast region.



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Figure 1. Garbage collectors of Pombal according to the sex.

## Level of education

We know that the activity of scavengers of garbage is done by both men and women and the education level is low. It is believed, the statements that had no opportunity to continue or complete the elementary school or middle, probably due to lack of financial status or social exclusion. Or, for having assumed responsibilities, including marriage, and having to carry

out a job to support their family, and as a unique source of income.

Figure 2 shows the educational level of garbage collectors in the city of Pombal.

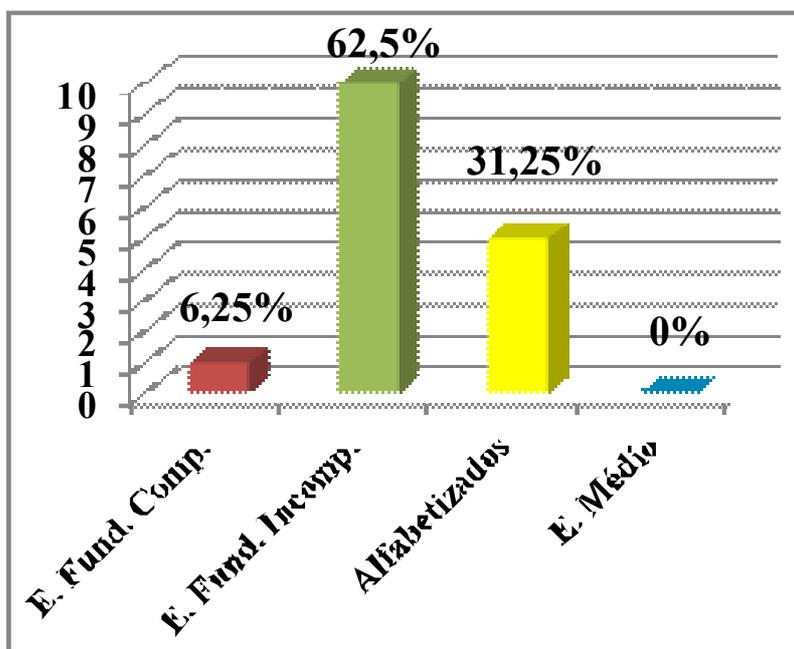


Figure 2. Data on the educational level of garbage collectors

What it is possible to see in the picture above is that families are less able to keep their children in school because the education level is 62.5% of elementary school. According to Rocha (2007) evaluating a study on municipal solid waste analyzed the level of education of that city garbage collectors showed the percentage of which 43% had completed high school and 3% had completed higher education.

According to Silva (2010) evaluating an everything from occupational hazards and implementation of proposals for health education to collectors of recyclable waste from the landfill Paranaíba-PI, found that 29 respondents have the schooling and 64.5% were illiterate illiteracy.

It is possible to affirm that the families of garbage collectors live in precarious conditions of life and have a low family income, which created obstacles to schooling even more difficult its chances of passage to a social group or class with better life.

## Marital status

Regarding the marital status of the interviewees, it was found that 95.3% were married and only 4.7% were single. According to Silva (2010) which evaluated a study on occupational hazards and implementation of proposals for health education to collectors of recyclable waste from the landfill Par-

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naíba-PI has been found that there was variation in marital status, and the highest were found among the 18 married respondents (40%), followed by singles, 15 respondents (33%).

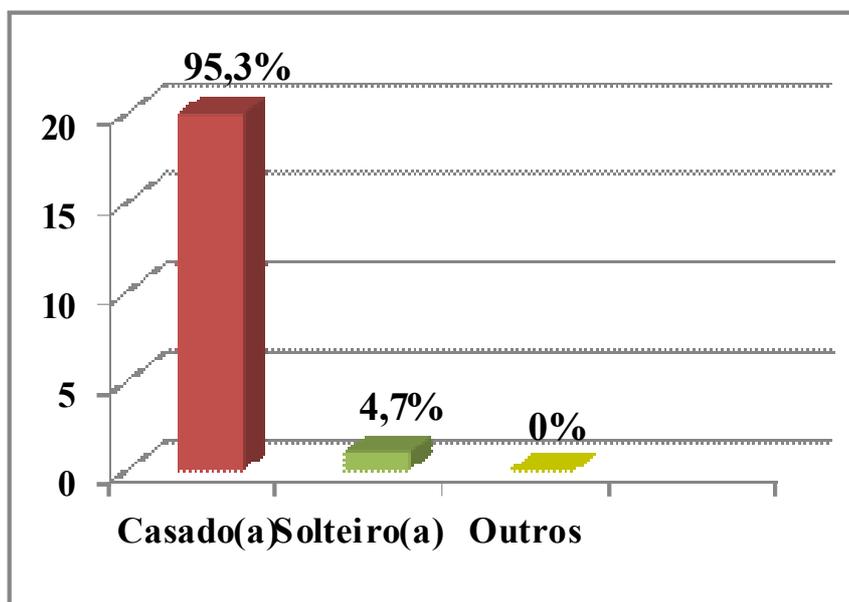


Figure 3. Marital status of garbage collectors of Pombal

### Profession and occupation before became garbage collectors in Pombal-PB

Most respondents said they were at the dump for more than five years, others for more than

10 years after the inauguration of the deposition area of the city's garbage. The interviewees expressed that before the function picked out of garbage had other functions, described in Table 1.

Table 1. Profession and occupation before they became garbage collectors of Pombal - PB

Profession	Nº of collectors	Percent(%)
Helper mason	4	18,1%
Domestic	3	13,6%
Gari	4	18,1%
Other activities	4	18,1%
Unemployed	7	32,1%
<b>Score</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100%</b>

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Low pay is a justification consistent with the fact that other occupations, said poor, inferior to that obtained with the trash.

### Monthly Income

The option to work with monthly household income of the collectors is built because of the difficulty in collecting accurate information on the monthly income achieved by the collectors. In most cases, the rule is only the need to pick up trash and sell. This type of routine helps the catcher has difficulty in pointing out how, financially, he has managed a month on grooming.

From then on the monthly income obtained from the garbage collectors of Pombal-PB within the

respondents, is less than half the minimum wage to 23.92% (Table 2), which the constant search for jobs has forced those who are in overcrowding on the submission of various forms of temporary work, when found.

According Romansini (2005) evaluated a study about the collector of solid waste-recycling in the context of modern society concluded that among the 14 workers who were interviewed landfill, can work with a monthly income ranging between 1 and two minimum wages. Most families of scavengers are composed of up to 4 people and 10 collectors have their own home. It is true that there are 45 homes rather modest, but these workers free of rent, which would further their already meager income.

**Table 2. Monthly income obtained by the garbage collectors of Pombal - PB**

Less than half the minimum wage	23,92%
Half the minimum wage	28%
A minimum wage	0%

It was observed, although the income is totalized in general with the sale of materials collected. Despite the low prices paid by middlemen (Table 3).

When asked if the children have helped them gave the collection work, the respondents: 72% yes, 28% said their children did not work.

### Aspects general

On general aspects, can be observed that most work without any protection and support in the workplace, just relying on the guidance of the association, to avoid cuts to the selective collection, not consumer damaged products, especially foods.

On the other hand, regarding the occurrence of diseases were unanimous in stating that had dengue fever, allergies, fungal infections, colds, diarrhea, headaches. Clearly the lack of protection of the garbage collectors of Pombal, probably lies tion sim-

ilar to other collectors in other lustations, mainly in large dumps.

In Pombal, the situation of the collectors is contact with animals, insects, birds, true competition. The visits *in loco* and photographic records confirmed the expectations in relation to the lives of scavengers and their families, which depend on this initiative to survive.

It is believed that the disclosure of data from this work, the public, or even the same private sector have a greater interest in the humble citizens who live directly or directly from the landfill and propose initiatives to improve the local infrastructure, contributing with the rescue of the citizens of this segment excluded, for example, may suggest areas of construction with shading, type shed or recycling plant, while still acquire and market products collected by fair price.

**Table 3. Amounts paid for from \$ kilogram (kg) for the products collected**

Type of garbage	Weight	Value R\$
Glass	1 Kg	R\$ 0,03
Cardboard	1 Kg	R\$ 0,05
Plastic	1 Kg	R\$ 0,40

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Metal	1 Kg	R\$ 0,10
Copper	1 Kg	R\$ 5,50
Plastic bottle	1 Kg	R\$ 0,20
Paper	1 Kg	R\$ 0,05

## CONSIDERATIONS FINAL

This work has important application to the knowledge of man's relationship with the environment, primarily in the relentless pursuit of survival for themselves and their dependants, when from an extremely polluted environment; they seek to provide back-up extract for their basic needs, even putting at risk their health or their lives. The present study also contributed to a personal perception about the human needs and challenges that are faced by garbage collectors.

It is intended to disseminate the results of this work, informing the public and social institutions so they can better propose management measures for this important social group in the city of Pombal, excluding the various actions required for the exercise of citizenship and quality of life needed and fundamental to human life.

It is recommended that "a greater look" of society organized for the aspects of humanization in this city, from the knowledge of a cruel reality that the subjecting picked out of garbage.

The study highlights the precariousness in which caters perform their functions without any protection, exposing themselves to serious health problems; because the research it was found that some have contracted some diseases leaving the appearance of compromised health.

It is proposed that the association, which already knows the difficulties, may intervene with the authorities and unions, service clubs and others, a greater concern about waste disposal, with the implementation of separate collection from households and other polluters.

To these considerations enable the adoption of urgent measures in order to contribute significantly to the improvement of living conditions and health of garbage collectors and their families.

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