



Newsletter

SWaCH+

A higher level of self-reliance

SWaCH presents to you its first Newsletter!



SWaCH brings to you its first newsletter! We hope to bring you many such newsletters quarterly to inform you about what is happening in SWaCH. All these activities are designed to improve our work – door to door collection of waste, and at the same time improve working conditions of our members. These past three months we have increased approx. 15 thousand homes,

we have added a tempo, begun e-waste collection and even hosted a paintings exhibition illustrating the transition of work over the past few years. We as always depend on your feedback to continue to upgrade our services without losing sight of what is best for our members.

SWaCH came into existence in 2007 and became operational in 2008. It is the institutional outcome of the door to door waste collection initiative of the KKPKP. The initiative brought together two interests - that of rag pickers/waste collectors interest in improving their livelihood and municipality's interest in sustainable solid waste management. A pilot implemented by the KKPKP and the Project for the Empowerment of rag pickers /waste collectors, SNDT Women's University in 2005 enabled 1500 waste collectors to become service providers. This considerably improved their conditions of work and upgraded their livelihoods. They effectively bridged the gap between the household and the municipal waste collection service.

Today 1900 SWaCH members service 3,00,000 households in 14 wards in Pune City. These services include Door to Door Collection of segregated waste, creation and maintenance of compost pits, housekeeping, running and maintenance of biogas plants.

Recent Initiatives

Inauguration of Mobile Recycling Unit

KKPKP has purchased a new vehicle, this vehicle or 'Mobile Recycling Unit' will be used to collect waste that has little or no resale value. The percentage of this kind of waste has been increasing at an alarming rate keeping up with changing consumer and packaging trends. Non-recyclable waste consists of metalized plastic (wafer, biscuit packets), plastic bags that are below 10-20 micron (locally known as Mein), rags, flex banners, tetrapak etc. Generally this type of waste is directed towards

garbage containers as it has low value in the recycling market or the technology to recycle it does not exist. KKPKP-SWaCH is partnering with companies to explore the options available to process this waste.

For KKPKP-SWaCH purchasing a vehicle is another step towards an improvement in the conditions of work for waste pickers. It also symbolises the breaking away from stereotypes that generally waste pickers are associated with-- waste pickers even today are labelled as thieves, vagrants and scavengers. Confident young girls at the wheel like Rukmini and Anita would definitely help change these stereotypes. Dr. Baba Adhav (President, Hamal Panchayat) and Shri Dyneshwar Molak (Dy. Commissioner, UCD) inaugurated this vehicle in the presence of over 200 SWaCH and KKPKP members and Shri Abhay Chajjed (Pune City Congress President), Sanjay Gawde (PMC Solid Waste Management Department), Mahadev Gaikwad (Ward Officer, Bhawani Peth), Dr. Mahadev Gaikwad (Ward Medical Officer, Bhawani Peth) and Dr. Dinesh Bhende (Ward Medical Officer, Dhole Patil Road), Mohan Nanavre (President, KKPKP).



Left: Rukmini and Anita with their mother Usha Phadke

Around 51 women from SWaCH (PMC and PCMC) have been trained to drive tempos under this initiative. Rukmini and Anita Phadke daughters of Usha Dasu Phadke (KKPKP-SWaCH member) were part of this training. "KKPKP-SWaCH is like our family, so we feel proud to work with SWaCH and interact with SWaCH members who are like our mothers and sisters", said Rukmini.

Nirmalya Collection and Recycling Project 2011

On 6th and 11th September 2011, 119 SWaCH wastepickers along with around 400 volunteers were stationed at 15 Visarjan Ghats in Pune city. As part of the Nirmalya Collection and Recycling Project these wastepickers collected 23 Tonnes of Nirmalya (flowers, fruit, coconuts etc) and 3.5 Tonnes of dry waste (plastic, thermocol, paper) over two visarjan days. In the 4th year of implementation, the Nirmalya Collection and Recycling Project is jointly planned and implemented by SWaCH and eCoexist. This year several corporates like Cummins, Emcure and Praj have sponsored this project at 15 Ghats.



SWaCH Wastepickers along with Volunteers at Bund Garden and Bhide Pul visarjan ghats

The Ghats are as follows: Chima Ghat (Sangamwadi ward), Sangam (Dhole Patil ward), Holkar Bridge (Sangamwadi wrad), Bund Garden (Dhole Patil ward), S M Joshi Pul (Kasba Vishram ward), Vitthal Mandir (Kasba Vishram Ward), Aundh Gaon (Aundh Ward), Mahadev Mandir, Bopodi (Aundh Ward), Vriddheshwar ,Garware , Panchaleshwar(Ghole Road Ward), Katraj ramp (Dhankavdi Ward), Duttawadi . Rajaram Pul (Tilak Road Ward), Bhide Pul (Kasba- Vishram ward).

As a new initiative this year, the footfall in 6 Ghats was tracked by SWaCH to determine how many citizens gave their nirmalya for recycling instead of immersing it in the river. Totally

25000 households from Sangam, Aundh gaon, Mahadev Mandir, Vriddeshwar, Garware and Katraj Ghats gave their Nirmalya to the wastepickers stationed at the Ghats.

Volunteers from Cummins, Praj, Emcure, Vishey Components, Fergusson College, Modern College, College of Engineering, Pune (COEP) as well as some individual volunteers enthusiastically interacted with citizens and explained to them the benefits of recycling Nirmalya and immersing their idols in the PMC provided tanks. All volunteers were identified by a green armband. The Nirmalya has been sent to the following institutions: Poona Blind School (Koregaon Park), Dilasa Centre (Karve road), Blind School (Karve Nagar), SWaCH office (Kothrud Garbage Depot), Aundh Ramp, Hadapsar Ramp, Bal Kalyan Sanstha (Aundh), National Chemical Laboratories (Pashan Road). Differently-abled children belonging to these schools are being given hands-on training on the process of composting Nirmalya. By January 2012, it is hoped that 2500 kgs of natural manure will be produced from the Nirmalya that has been collected.

Exhibition of Paintings:

SWaCH has several case studies, reports and documents that trace the change in conditions of work of waste pickers subsequent to the formation of SWaCH. But in order to reach out to a wider audience, and communicate the true value of the work of wastepickers not only in sustaining their own family but also in mitigating climate change and reducing municipal Solid Waste Management costs, this time round SWaCH decided to do things a little differently. Shirin Rehman, an artist from Singapore, volunteered for over two months with SWaCH. Shirin was touring India and living with indigenous communities to experience firsthand their battles against poverty. SWaCH took the opportunity and invited her to depict the lives and work of waste pickers. In order to do justice to her subject, Shirin lived with waste pickers in various slums in Pune. She not only experienced their life first hand but also got the opportunity to document it through a medium that we have never used before – paintings. Through 11 paintings, Shirin has depicted the conditions of work of waste pickers, their daily routine as well as the change in conditions of work after the formation of SWaCH.



Paintings by Shirin Rehman

Portable Recycling Centres



We at SWaCH have been in the process of devising new strategies to create a healthier citizen – waste picker interface. Part of this initiative has been to reduce visual discomfort caused to citizens due to the waste pickers sorting waste on the sides of roads. These recycling centres have been erected as per the provisions of the Maharashtra Non Biodegradable Garbage Control Ordinance 2006 Article 348, Clause (3).

There is a dearth of designated spaces in Pune city where waste pickers can sit and sort dry waste. Due to this, it is common sight to see waste pickers sitting at the side of the road or beside garbage containers sorting waste. These recycling centres or sorting sheds provide a space for waste pickers where they are sheltered from the harsh sun as well as the rain, they can sort dry waste without causing any visual discomfort to citizens. SWaCH has put up four such recycling centres in Pune City, one in Ghole Road ward and three in Bibwewadi ward.

For any decentralised waste management model to be successful, the demarcation of such spaces is a must. Participation of the local community as well as the community taking ownership of their own waste will go a long way in ensuring that we create a sustainable and inclusive model for decentralised waste management in Pune city.

Segregation Drives:

SWaCH has been conducting segregation drives in several localities in Aundh Ward. These drives have been done with the support of student volunteers of Fergusson College, Pune and Aundh Vikas Mandal (AVM). The primary objective of conducting these drives was to encourage people to segregate their waste into wet and dry waste. Segregation of Waste is mandated by law [Maharashtra Non Biodegradable Garbage Control Ordinance 2006 Article 348, Clause (3)]. It is the duty of each citizen to segregate their waste in to wet and dry waste.

Volunteers along with SWaCH staff visited households in the below areas. Through the medium of leaflets and a circular issued by the Aundh Ward office, citizens were informed about the importance of segregating their household waste.

The segregation drives were conducted in the following areas:

- Anand Park
- Green Park
- Ashiyana Society
- National Society
- National Chemical Laboratories campus
- Montvert Society

Similar drives are being planned and conducted in other parts of Pune. To be part of such drives contact us

New outreach material:

Waste pickers & Climate change

We collect, we sort, we recycle... we're climate change agents!

- We collect 13% - 20% of Pune's waste (paper, metal, glass, organic waste...), sort it into almost 13 categories and recycle everything we can. Our recycling helps the PMC keep the city clean.
- We reduce harmful green house gases like Carbon Dioxide and Methane and ensure that you have cleaner air to breathe by recycling garbage.
- We save 17 trees of paper that we gather, for every ton!
- Without us, recycling in Pune would be close to zero. There would be 20% more waste on the streets, 30% less material available for recycling.

SWaCH

Segregate Your Waste

Wet Waste

- kitchen waste
- fruits
- bones
- fish
- hair
- meat
- teal leaves
- finger nails

Dry Waste

- batteries
- wrappers
- bulbs
- broken animals
- nails
- metal pieces
- cardboard
- bottles
- cloths
- paper
- tubes

SWaCH

S.T. Dispo Bags

Chuck De, the right way!

Sanitary Pads are not bio-degradable, but can we make their disposal less degrading?

You roll it and chuck it, sparing little thought to what happens to sanitary pads after they are disposed.

They are not bio-degradable and while sorting through waste with their hands, waste pickers are exposed to these! Not only is this degrading, it also makes them prone to falling ill.

Why should anyone have to handle our bodily waste? Dispose your pads and tampons in an identifiable paper bag.

Now that you know the right way, order 17 (SPT) right away. Call - 26666666

SWaCH

WHY COMPOST?

Composting is an inexpensive, natural process that transforms your kitchen and garden waste into valuable food for your garden.

It is mandatory for all societies formed after the year 2000 to compost organic waste, as per a ruling by the PMC.

Composting is one way of getting an eco housing clearance where you can avail of a 5% rebate on your property tax.

Compost also helps the environment because it diverts food-scrap and kitchen waste away from landfill where it would decompose anaerobically (without air), thus producing methane, a greenhouse gas 30 times more dangerous than carbon dioxide.

It costs next to nothing to compost, aside from the initial investment. In fact, if you have a garden your compost pile can save you money by reducing what you spend on fertilizer.

The first step towards composting is to segregate your household waste.

Dry waste is collected from your doorstep by the SWaCH collector.

The wet waste can easily be composted at home or in the society compost pit.

Contact SWaCH if you want a compost unit at Home/ in your society/ School/ Office...

For a small cost, a trained waste collector will maintain and manage your compost everyday.

A supervisor will also make visits to ensure that all is well.

Don't go by the rumour that compost attracts rodents and flies. Only compost done wrong smells or attracts vermin.

Contact us for any help in troubleshooting existing problems if already composting.

SWaCH

This material is available in the form of fliers and banners. Contact us for copies of the same or download them from our website www.swachcoop.com



An efficient move

Mobile garbage recycling unit has given these women an opportunity to earn livelihood in a better way

Sonia Rodrigues

The Solid Waste Collection and Handling (SWaCH) inaugurated its first mobile garbage recycling unit in the city recently. SWaCH Co-op, established by Kagad Kaich Patra Kashi-takari Panchayat (KKPKP), is an autonomous enterprise of waste pickers that is authorised to provide door-to-door waste collection and waste management services by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC).

SWaCH manages both dry and wet waste, thus facilitating a zero garbage scenario. Suvarna Sargade, the first woman to undergo training in driving lessons to drive the mobile unit, has come a long way from the days of roaming the streets with a sack on her back looking for recyclable waste to support her family.

Rukmini and Anita Dasu Phadke, who have both undergone driving lessons and are ready to drive the mobile unit say, "KKPKP-SWaCH is like our family. We feel proud to work and interact in this organisation as all members are like our kin. At first, the girls had jitters while learning to drive.

an alarming rate in our city due to consumer needs and packaging trends. Manisha Desai of the organisation, says, "The mobile recycling unit will be used to collect non-recyclable waste that has little or no resale value. It includes metalised plastic (wafer, biscuit packets), plastic bags below 10-20 microns, rags, flex banners and so on. Generally, this waste is directed towards garbage containers as it has low value in the recycling market. Our organisation is partnering with certain companies to explore options available to process the waste. The main reason behind purchasing it tempo is to improve working conditions for waste pickers. It also symbolises the breaking away from stereotypes that generally waste pickers are associated with as thieves, vagrants and scavengers. Confident young girls at the wheel like Rukmini and Anita would definitely help change such thinking."

So far, 51 women have been trained as drivers in PMC and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC).

sonia.rodrigues@theingroup.com

"Earlier, we were scared but determined. If boys can do it why can't we? That's the thought that drove me to take up driving lessons."
Percentage of non-recyclable waste has been increasing at

Clean concept

Student volunteers along with SWaCH members visited households in Anand Park, Green Park, Ashiyana Society, National Society, National Chemical Laboratories campus and Montvert Society in Aundh to create awareness about segregation of waste

Sonia Rodrigues

Over the past month, SWaCH has been conducting segregation drives in several localities within the Aundh Ward. These drives have been done with the support of student volunteers of Fergusson College, Pune and Aundh Vikas Mandal (AVM). The primary objective of conducting these drives is to encourage people to segregate wet and dry waste.

SWaCH stands for Solid Waste Collection and Handling or officially the SWaCH

Seva Sahakari Sansha Maryadi, Pune. Manisha Desai manager, citizen outreach of SWaCH says, "Segregation of waste is mandated by law - Maharashtra Non Biodegradable Garbage Control Ordinance 2006 Article 340, Clause (2). It is the duty of each citizen to segregate their waste in to wet and dry waste."

Volunteers along with SWaCH staff visited all households in areas like Anand Park, Green Park, Ashiyana Society, National Society, National Chemical Laboratories campus and Montvert Society. Through the medium of

leaflets and a circular issued by the Aundh Ward office citizens were informed about the importance of segregating their household waste.

Manisha Desai adds, "Only 8% of Pune's citizens segregate their waste. After we did the segregation drive in Aundh, percentage has gone up. Anand Park is one of the few localities in Aundh that has begun giving segregated waste to SWaCH members. It has taken a tremendous amount of effort on the part of SWaCH and the student volunteers to bring the segregation percentage up. But unless these drives are sustained, the chances of this percentage dropping are very high. We appeal to citizens to segregate their waste and contribute towards building a Zero Waste neighborhood. Every drive starts off very optimistically but eventually loses its momentum, so unless every individual steps in to sustain such a drive is very difficult."

"Citizens who continue to give mixed waste will be issued an initial notice from the Aundh ward office. If they continue to do so in spite of the notice the ward office will be compelled to impose heavy penalties on such citizens," states Manisha.

"The citizens can give feedback or contact the SWaCH group where they can monitor their services on their service webpage."

sonia.rodrigues@theingroup.com



SWaCH Coop, established by KKPKP, is an autonomous enterprise of waste pickers that is authorized to provide door-to-door waste collection and waste management services by the Pune Municipal Corporation. SWaCH manages both dry and wet waste, thus facilitating a zero garbage scenario for your community.

Clean environment

Greens, PMC stop 1,21,000 kg of nirmalya from rivers

2,500 employees, 119 wastepickers, 400 volunteers worked relentlessly during festival

DNA Correspondent

A whopping 26,000 kg of nirmalya (floral offerings) was diverted from the rivers of Pune by green activists — led by the SWaCH (solid waste collection and handling) cooperative and social enterprise eCoexist — during Ganesh idol immersion ceremonies this year.

A press statement issued by SWaCH on Monday stated that as many as 119 SWaCH waste pickers and 400 volunteers from colleges and corporates were stationed at 15 immersion spots on the river banks in Pune city to prevent nirmalya from being cast into the river.

The statement said the nirmalya collection and recycling project saw the team collect 23 tonnes of flowers, fruit, coconuts and other ma-



Devotees donated Ganesh idols and immersed in an immersion tank in Pimpri-Chinchwad area on Sunday —Narish Hatu DNA

terial and 3.5 tonnes dry waste (plastic, thermocol, paper) on September 6 and 11, the two key days of the immersion. This year corporates such as Cummins, Emcure and Praj sponsored the project at 15 ghats.

Employees of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) collected another 95,000 kg nirmalya during the immersion ceremony, up by 20,000 kg over last year. Deputy municipal commissioner Suresh Jagtap said the PMC had kept containers at 140 locations to collect nirmalya. About 300 kg gudi was also collected. After the immersion pro-

cession 2,500 PMC employees started cleaning roads in the city. The cleaning of major thoroughfares like Tilak Road, Kumbhkar Road, Melkar Road, Bajirao Road and Laxmi Road was over by 1.30 pm.

In a new initiative, the footfalls in six ghats was tracked by SWaCH to determine how many citizens gave their nirmalya for recycling, instead of immersing it in the river. Nirmalya from 25,000 households from Sangam, Aundhgaon, Mahadev Mandir, Vriddeshwar, Garware and Katraj ghats gave their nirmalya to the wastepickers and volunteers.



PUNE
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2011

WASTE TO WEALTH

Making A Clean Sweep

A band of women is helping keep Pune clean by gathering its waste and recycling much of it.

RASHMI K PRATAP

IT'S EIGHT IN THE MORNING on a rainy monsoon day. With a raincoat over her neatly tied pink sari and a vermilion tilak on her forehead, Rakmini Bai is already at work. Humming a Marathi tune, she rings a doorbell and greets the resident. In no time, she has collected the household's garbage, put it in a bucket and moved her pushcart to the next house. Rakmini's day begins like this and before noon, she and her companion Lata have covered about 130 households in and around Nalbarahona Society in Pune's Kothrud area. Rakmini is happy as she earns more money than ever before and with much more dignity than in the first 35 years of her life.

"I've put on some weight. I look better. I'm healthier and happier. I even save money now," she says, describing the transformation in her life since becoming a member of Swach: a cooperative enterprise of self-employed ragpickers, waste collectors and urban poor in Pune. Swach members are self-employed workers who retrieve and sell recyclable scrap as a means of livelihood. They are not municipal employees.

Before Swach was formed in 2008, Rakmini had to travel long distances to collect garbage, frequently fight with other trashpickers over the "division of area for waste collection" and worse, carry the waste on her head. "Wet waste used to

drip from my head. I would fall ill frequently. Even the police used to beat us up as others would complain about us," she says. But all that is now past. Rakmini's indigo blue overcoat, gloves and Swach badge ensure that people treat her better. Swach has provided her with buckets, pushcarts and other equipment to ensure hygienic collection of waste.

Rakmini earns around ₹190 per day, almost the same as the government's minimum wage rate. The best part is that she earns this money in just about six to seven hours and gets to spend time with her two children, whom she has now enrolled in a school.

THRIVING ON WASTE

Swach's roots go back to the 1990s when Purnima Chikamane and Latani Narayan—two lecturers at the Pune campus of SNUIT University—conducted adult education classes in the slums of Yerawada, Pune. Seeing the plight of ragpickers, especially young girls, they began requesting locals to segregate wet and dry waste so that the scavengers didn't have to spend the day sifting through garbage. That plan worked.

By 1993, after many meetings with social workers and waste pickers, the Kagal Kach Putra Kashiakari Panchayat (KKPKP) was formed. Nearly 6,300 of 7,000 wastepickers in Pune joined the union. "The numbers were too huge

to be ignored by the Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporations. Since these women were helping the municipality by removing waste, municipalities began issuing photo IDs and a red pass to wastepickers. Over time, the number increased to nearly 10,000," says Malini Gadgil, the current CEO of Swach. The ID card allowed them to legitimately scavenge, reducing police brutality. In 2000, when the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) rules were announced, there was pressure on the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to bring corporates into waste management. This raised fears of a loss of livelihood for the nearly 10,000 waste collectors. Municipalities had been given a timeframe of 10 years to adhere to the



NOT A DIRTY JOB: CEO Malini Gadgil (in pink) is justifiably proud of Swach's achievements.



new rules. While KKPKP continued its waste collection work like before, it also began intense lobbying with environmentalists, politicians and municipal commissioners to ensure that private waste management companies would stay out of KKPKP in 2008. With the parent promoting it as an autonomous enterprise providing front-end waste management services to the citizens of Pune rather than bringing in corporates.

"Swach members today bridge the garbage gap between households and the PMC through door-to-door waste collection as well as by segregating dry and wet garbage and passing it on for recycling. We had started doing this work

STARTED
2008

REVENUES
₹11 lakh per month*

EMPLOYEES
35

CUSTOMERS
292,000 households

SOCIAL IMPACT
Livelihood with dignity for scavengers/ragpickers in Pune.

WASTE TO WEALTH

waste management companies typically either dump waste in landfill sites (which is becoming difficult now with more areas coming under habitation) or burn it. Burning requires energy, which is also wasted. "So you are actually wasting energy on waste," says Gadgil.

Realising that it is impossible to manage waste without manual help, Swach is now growing laterally. "We are now offering waste-related services like sweeping, housekeeping, street cleaning and composting," says Gadgil. These services, offered by the Swach's division, are bringing in revenues of around ₹11 lakh a month.

mus that year. "It's not only money; it's money with dignity. We are now seen as service providers and not as people to be hated or looked down upon," explains Borade while separating waste outside the Chinchwad scrap shop.

PMC DEAL

Swach has inked a memorandum of understanding with the PMC, which helps meet its administrative expenses. The latter paid ₹14 lakh towards Swach's expenses in 2007 while it was being set up and ₹1.2 crore in 2008 when it became operational. It subsequently got

opportunities. "This work is also better because we can go home whenever we want," Shinde says. "There is no regulation over us and nobody asks unnecessary questions. Domestic work puts many restrictions on us," she adds.

Swach is planning three more recycling stores in Chikali, Thergon and Sangli in Pune. The space for all these stores has been provided by the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC). One of the new shops will mainly deal with mobile scrap, says Gadgil. Currently, all the e-waste (electronic waste) goes to Delhi or Mumbai for segregation and



Swach offers waste-related services like housekeeping and composting, in addition to garbage collection.

"We are breaking even," she adds. Swach also has two scrap recycling stores at Chinchwad and Katri. Wastepickers sell their recyclables at the shops (they are free to sell to anyone outside as well) and earn money as members of the cooperative. The store at Chinchwad has been making profits since it started in 1998. In 2010, ₹2.35 lakh was distributed as bonus among the 82 wastepickers who are currently the members of the cooperative scrap store. Inda Rajalakshmi Borade, a wastepicker, received a whopping ₹23,283 as a bo-

₹90 lakh in 2010 and ₹70 lakh this year. "The amount has been reducing every year now as members of Swach give back 5% of their earnings towards administrative expenses. The idea is to become sustainable and scalable," says Gadgil. And her staff is not complaining. Kanta Mohan Shinde says, "We prefer to work for Swach as it is a much cleaner job. Moreover, we get money out of the dry waste everyday. That gives us liquid cash." These ragpickers are so happy with their work that they don't want to become domestic help despite the availability of

extraction. Up to 60% of this waste is removed and re-used, leaving huge scope for money generation. "We have taken the necessary approvals to dismantle e-waste. We will begin it soon," she adds. This seems to be just the beginning for the enterprise. "Over a period of time, the aim is to start large-scale composting, biogas plants and e-waste handling," explains Gadgil. Clearly, Swach has big plans. It helps that it is backed by an army of women who also dream big. Email us at business@outlookindia.com or SMS OLB-Jee@swach at 575798

SWaCH Pune Seva Sahakari Sanstha Ltd. is a collective of self employed wastepickers that provides waste collection and management services. It is authorised by the Pune Municipal Corporation.

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