



# 8 TALKING TRASH!

A Cooperative of Rag-pickers who are sorting their way into reduced emissions and a dignified livelihood

### Geographical Area and Context

✎ In an urban setting, one of the lowest in the strata of society are the rag-pickers. They rummage through the dustbins and garbage under the most unhygienic conditions to look for recyclable material that they can sell. They are treated without dignity and as out-castes.

### A step to Recognition

✎ The Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) is the association of rag pickers/waste collectors and itinerant waste buyers in Pune which was established during a convention of waste pickers in 1993. Working with the KKPKP, SWaCH, SWaCH Coop is India's first wholly owned cooperative of self employed rag pickers /waste collectors and other urban poor came into existence and was registered in 2007.

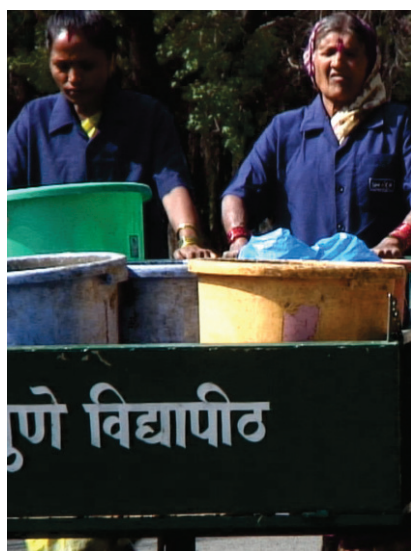
✎ Using the base of the existing cooperative, their fundamental role was to integrate the rag-pickers into the Solid Waste Management system by collecting garbage from the doorstep as opposed to the earlier practice of collecting recyclable waste from the garbage bins.

✎ The Municipal Corporations encouraged this integration and identity cards were issued to the rag-pickers.

### Trash talks

✎ The rag-pickers have approached the citizens directly with a host of services for which a nominal amount is charged. The garbage is segregated into wet and dry waste directly at the doorstep. The dry waste is then further sent to be recycled. This waste can be sold by the rag-pickers, who earn from this and also the amount charged as user fee for collecting at the doorstep.

✎ In this way, the rag-pickers earn a livelihood and along with it the waste that



**LOCATION**  
PUNE CITY, PIMPRI AND CHINCHWAD

**TECHNOLOGY/PROCESS**  
AUTHORISED DOOR TO DOOR WASTE COLLECTION AND OTHER ALLIED WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

**BENEFICIARIES**  
RAGPICKERS IN PUNE CITY, PIMPRI AND CHINCHWAD

**PROJECT FACILITATOR**  
SWACH (SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND HANDLING), PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

**IMPLEMENTATION**  
IN 5 YEARS ABOUT 1700 WOMEN RAG-PICKERS AND ABOUT 2,79,000 HOUSEHOLDS COVERED

**OPERATIONS**  
THE RAGPICKERS RECEIVE A MONTHLY SALARY AND REVENUE FROM THE SALE OF SORTED SCRAP

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would have normally gone to the landfill site is reduced significantly because it is segregated at the point of collection. Only wet waste is then sent to the landfill site.

- ✓ The rag-pickers now integrated into a functioning system are recognized and demonstrate self-confidence.
- ✓ This has been in process now for 5 years and about 1700 women rag-pickers have been integrated into this process and about 2,79,000 households have been covered in Pune which is about 35% of Pune. SWaCH plans to expand to all of Pune within one year with support from the Municipal Corporations.

#### Sorting the emission crisis?

- ✓ There is much less wet-waste as it is segregated at the doorstep
- ✓ There is more dry waste that is going for recycling
- ✓ The reduced amount of garbage in the landfill has also reduced the amount of emission
- ✓ Scrap collectors salvage 144 tonnes of recyclable scrap prior to its transportation, thereby saving the Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporations a sum of Rs.1,58,22,750 (almost Rs. 16 million) per annum in transportation costs alone which includes the emissions from the fuel of the transport.



Previously my child used to be tied to my back and I would sift through the garbage bins. People used to shout at us, shun us. But now we earn a dignified living.

- Pagabai Gaekwad, Garbage Collector and Sorter, Pune University



I get a monthly salary and also extra money from the scrap that I sell, that is why I prefer it here.

- Rekha Shinde, Garbage Collector at Pune University