

Urban Livelihoods Approaches: Need for a New Thrust

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FOREWORD

There is a widespread perception that poverty in India is concentrated in the rural areas. Although, it is true that the officially estimated urban poverty ratio (at 21 per cent on average for all of India according to the Planning Commission's poverty estimates for 2009-10) is considerably lower than the rural ratio of 34 per cent; according to the Census of India, 2011, around 12 per cent of the urban population in "Class I" cities lived in slums, with higher rates in larger cities. The urban population in India is increasing rapidly. As per Census of India, 2011, India's urban population is now 377 million which shows a 31 percent increase from 2001. Along with the growth in urban population, the percentage of urban poor is also increasing, their life characterized by illiteracy, lack of skill, reliance to monetized and informal economy, inadequate housing, lack of basic amenities, vulnerability to diseases, environmental hazard and social fragmentation.

Though the urban poor make a significant contribution to the economy, most of their livelihoods are self financing; they get minimal assistance from state run organizations like urban local bodies, financial institutions and the colonies/slums they live in, have minimal infrastructure and are often illegal. The social and spatial marginalization of this economically weaker group makes it a very vulnerable group.

ACCESS Development Services, instituted for and mandated to serve the poor and help them overcome poverty and live with dignity, has been making efforts at all levels of the sectoral value chain to impact and improve the livelihoods of the poor. While working on-the-ground, ACCESS also realizes the critical significance of assimilating experiences of different stakeholders engaged in livelihoods promotion of poor towards enabling cross learning. Through the initiatives like the Livelihoods India Conference, the State of India's Livelihoods Report and various policy retreats and visioning exercises, ACCESS has been attempting to contribute towards dissemination and sharing of best practices for the benefit of the sector, and plays the role of a knowledge repository.

Given that the Government of India has launched National Urban Livelihood Mission in September 2013, it was felt important to highlight and share experiences of different stakeholders engaged in urban livelihoods issues. It is in this context that **Experiences in Enhancing Livelihoods of the Urban Poor** was initiated as the theme for the 2013 Sitaram Rao Livelihoods India Case Study Competition.

The large number of cases received cover wide ranging experiences from skill development in the unorganised sector, to creating livelihood opportunities for survivors and women at risk of trafficking, to various interventions with rag-pickers and sweepers to organize them, upgrade

their skills and provide them with dignity and voice, and enabling the unskilled through safety training and crisis management. It was indeed a hard task for the Jury to pick the eight best cases. The Jury comprised of sector experts such as Ms. Prema Gera, UNDP, Ms. Radhika Binani, MSDF, Mr. Farrukh Rahman Khan, Oxfam India, Dr. Sankar Datta, Azim Premji University and Prof. Prabal Sen, XLRI.

On behalf of ACCESS, I take this opportunity to thank Oxfam India and Michael and Susan Dell Foundation for supporting this important initiative this year. I thank the technical partner of the Case Study Competition, Fr. Arrupe Center for Ecology and Sustainability, XLRI for painstakingly going through all abstracts and cases received and shortlisting the best cases, to be presented to the Jury. I also thank all those who have shown interest in the case study competition and submitted their cases. Special thanks and appreciation is due to the time and effort put in by the Jury members, albeit their very busy schedules, to critically examine the cases and help us with the final list.

Most importantly, I would like to thank my colleagues Puja and Natasha for the tremendous efforts and energies put in the roll out and in managing the entire process with great alacrity and efficiency. These big efforts by small teams in ACCESS inspire us all the time to raise the bar for doing better. I hope this case study compendium will bring some new insights on urban poverty issues and will offer value to the sector.

Vipin Sharma
CEO
ACCESS Development Services

SWaCH Cooperative - Transforming a Stigmatised Occupation into Decent Work

Ujwala Samarth and Aparna Susarla

Introduction

This case study tells the story of SWaCH Coop, a wholly-owned workers' cooperative which not only enabled a marginalised and historically deprived community to protect and promote its livelihoods rights, but which has also transformed waste collection from a precarious and stigmatised occupation into more regular 'decent work'¹.

From 1993 when they first organised themselves to 2008 when SWaCH was launched, how have Pune's waste pickers protected their livelihoods and how do they plan to retain the space within the urban economy that they have created for themselves? What are the threats they face? What impact, in real terms, has the SWaCH Coop had on their lives? Does the SWaCH model offer lessons to other cities? These are some of the questions this case study will try to address.

Background

The story of SWaCH hinges on the coming together of people, activists and waste pickers; waste pickers bonding with other waste pickers in solidarity; and waste pickers, government and citizens coming together to operationalise SWaCH Cooperative.

The story goes back to 1990 when a group of young social work graduates helping to implement the National Adult Education Programme through the SNTD Women's University, met child waste-pickers at an education centre. The children were peeping through the windows where their mothers and other women from the community were learning. Even though they were full of curiosity and obviously unschooled, when invited to enter and join in, the children (mainly girls) said that they had work to do, pointed to their sacks, and ran off.

Inspired by the pedagogical method of Paulo Freire, the 'teachers' (activists) decided to accompany the children on their waste picking

¹ "Decent work" means that they have better occupational health and safety conditions. It also means that the image of the waste pickers among the public and the waste pickers themselves has transformed from scavengers or thieves to citizens engaged in a profession which has immense social value. Furthermore, working conditions are improved through access to .:

- Shaded sorting sheds and proper infrastructure and storage which give protection against sun and rain, which caused other health problems, increasing health expenditure and causing loss of work days.
- Pushcarts eliminating head loading of heavy of recyclables, causing severe musculoskeletal problems.
- Uniforms acknowledging the status of waste pickers as public service providers and raising their self-esteem and public recognition.

rounds. Watching the children fishing around knee-deep in muck for recyclables, the activists speculated on how much easier and safer it would be if the children could have access to source segregated scrap. Would this offer them better working conditions and more time for 'education'? The activists felt it would make a big difference. They campaigned for and secured source segregation of garbage in an elite neighbourhood nearby so that the girls could source the scrap easily.

Then, events took an unexpected turn. Without the activists overtly broaching the subject of child labour or schooling, the children's mothers (who were waste pickers themselves) saw the chance to rectify a missed opportunity -- "Our daughters have never been to school", they told the activists. "Let them learn. We'll enrol them in school and we'll collect the segregated scrap."

In a first for waste pickers, SNDT University issued identity cards to about thirty adult women waste-pickers for collecting source segregated scrap in the neighbourhood.

The effect of access to source-segregated waste, 'legitimised' by ID Cards, had a measurably positive effect on the waste pickers' livelihoods. Since 'clean' waste and recyclables fetched better prices at the scrap shop, earnings improved dramatically, hours of work reduced and occupational hazards (animal bites, cuts and wounds, infections) were less.

Six months later, other events occurred which pushed the waste pickers closer to organising themselves to protect their livelihoods. An entrepreneur began to offer door to door garbage collection (using two labourers and a tempo) on payment of a fee, in the same neighbourhood where the waste pickers worked. He promised to rid the neighbourhood of garbage containers (and by default, of waste pickers). The citizens thought this a great idea (bins were smelly and waste pickers were widely perceived as almost 'criminal'). The waste pickers soon felt a direct and negative impact on their livelihoods. When protests and direct appeals had no effect on either the entrepreneur or the citizens, the waste pickers resorted to a *bin chipko andolan*, holding on to the bins so that they could not be carted away. The tactic managed to convey the waste pickers' desperation and need – the residents relented and discontinued the service and the entrepreneur withdrew.

This small victory put into focus several undeniable truths:

1. There could be other claimants to the "wealth in waste" and waste pickers had to actively guard and protect their livelihoods against threats.
2. Small group endeavours were not likely to be effective in countering such threats – waste pickers had to organise. Baba Adhav introduced the activists to the concept of 'critical mass' in organising the poor.

3. Waste pickers had to have ownership and had to script their own exit from exploitation – the activists could only facilitate the process.

Thus, began a long process of discussion, reflection and dialogue amongst the waste pickers, mediated by the young activists and researchers, guided by labour leader Baba Adhav.

The women from the group of thirty (convinced of the effectiveness of collective action by their earlier experience) campaigned alongside the activists, convincing their colleagues that it was time to stand up, speak out and assert their rights. Gradually, Pune's waste pickers became aware that their contribution to society was far more substantial than just "kachra chivadne"² (rummaging through garbage). Realising that they were in fact integral to the smooth functioning of the city, and that though they were poor they had rights as equal citizens, the waste pickers decided not to remain 'invisible' any longer and came together in 1993 to form *Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat* (KKPKP), a waste pickers' union.

Say Lakshmi Narayan and Poornima Chikermane, activists who were part of this process, "The core group sought to establish an alternate identity for waste-pickers as "workers" premised on the belief that scrap collection was *socially relevant, economically productive and environmentally beneficial "work"*, and that the working conditions *could be changed.*"

A seminal study in 2001 quantified waste pickers' contribution to the city and showed that by sorting and recycling waste, Pune's waste pickers saved the corporation an astounding Rs. 16 million annually in transport costs alone. Armed with these figures, the waste pickers campaigned for official recognition as workers, obtaining official endorsement of the union-issued ID cards and also successfully campaigned for workers' health insurance.

A third key demand, inclusion of waste pickers within the city's Solid Waste Management (SWM) system, was now waiting to be addressed. And it is this demand that eventually led to the formation of SWaCH Coop, the subject of this case study.

Waste pickers – A Profile of the Community and Sector

Poor, dalit³, unschooled, female, and usually main earner of the household – that would be an apt description of the typical waste picker in Pune. The majority of Pune's waste pickers are (or are children of) those who fled the devastating drought of 1972 which ravaged Marathwada and sent hundreds of thousands of villagers to towns and urban centres like Pune in a search of work and survival.

² Typically, when asked what work they did, waste pickers would answer: "Work? We don't work. We just rummage through garbage." Typically, they also did an average of 6 hours of back-breaking waste picking every day, walking about 10-12 kms and carrying loads of up to 40 kg!

³ The proportion of Scheduled Caste population to the total population in Maharashtra was 10 % and that in Pune District was 11 % (Census of India 2001) while the proportion of Dalits in this occupation is 94 % in Pune city (IEMS).

In the city, these rural urban migrants took to waste picking to earn a living. In any case, it was almost impossible for 'low-caste' women to get employment as domestic servants, and they themselves were not keen on becoming construction labourers, the only other option for unskilled manual workers in the city. But while waste picking staved off starvation, the livelihood it provided was precarious at best. As one elderly waste picker put it, "If you found recyclable waste, you sold it and your children ate that night. If you didn't, they drank tea and slept hungry. Sometimes there wasn't even sugar for the tea. And some times, there was no fuel for the stove."

Box 1: Profile of Waste pickers

- A third of the waste pickers were in women-headed households.
- A quarter were widowed or deserted.
- And almost half contributed more than 50% of the household income. A more recent study found that in their sample, 82% of women waste pickers were the main income earners in their households.

(Source: A 2001 Study)

Waste picking has historically always been at the bottom of the heap, even in the informal sector – in terms of social status, stigma and stability of earnings. But hierarchies held sway within the waste sector too⁴, and the women who eventually formed the core of the *Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat* and later, SWaCH, were working at the very bottom of this hierarchy – the lowest of the low, as it were.

That caste and gender play a defining role in this occupation is hard to dispute.

An Opportunity is Seized

In 2000, the government brought in the Municipal Solid Waste (Management and Handling) Rules. These new rules said that municipalities must recycle and process waste, set up door to door waste collection and minimise the volume of waste dumped in landfills. Like most other municipal bodies, Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) was at a loss as to how go about achieving these targets.

Within KKPKP, activists and members had been speculating about the impact that the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Rules would have on the free-roaming waste pickers. Who would PMC contract to do segregation and sorting of waste – would the contractor allow waste pickers' access to waste? Could the waste pickers of Pune take on this work? It could be one way of getting integrated into the waste collection system – and it would

⁴ The waste sector can be visualised as a pyramid, with various categories of scrap re-processors at the apex, various types of buyers (fixed and itinerant) in the middle, and at the very lowest level, the waste pickers engaging in "free" collection of scrap from municipal garbage bins and dumps, along the roadsides and outside houses in neighbourhoods.

give waste pickers access to 'clean' waste. It seemed clear that instead of waiting for events to unfold, it was necessary to jump in and seize the opportunity.

One of the KKPKP activists describes the waste pickers' decision to put away their doubts and propose a user-fee-based door to door waste collection scheme to PMC, as a 'leap of faith'. "The women trusted us and the union, agreed that in principle the scheme had the possibility of success - and took that leap. They were unsure about how many people would pay user fees. They were also unsure about how much dry waste they would get to sell. But they were willing to sacrifice some earnings in the immediate future for a chance of a better livelihood for all waste pickers in the future".

The seeds of SWaCH Coop were sown.

And in doing so, the waste pickers changed the paradigms of Pune's waste collection sector and in effect, changed their own lives.

SWaCH - Strategies and Aspirations

In many of the KKPKP group meetings and discussions, waste pickers would identify 'security of job', 'regular earnings' and 'decent work' as key points on their 'wish list'. But they were also quite clear that waste picking was what they knew, and this is what they would stay with. As an occupation, waste picking gave them flexibility, and allowed them to earn enough to survive on. Of course, everyone also wanted more regular earnings and access to waste without having to sift through the reeking bins full of all sorts of dangers. Moreover, who doesn't have aspirations for the future of one's children and old-age security?

Once the idea of SWaCH was mooted, it began to rapidly take shape. The two key and unique features of the scheme would be:

- User fees collected from each household
- Source segregated waste - wet and dry
- Waste pickers to retain rights over waste collected

The waste pickers called themselves *Swachateche Warkari* (harbingers of cleanliness), and a two year scheme was launched in 2005, in two wards of Pune city. Eventually, this 'pilot' scheme grew to cover 1.5 lakh households in pockets of 14 wards.

This was the most exciting but also most difficult time for the first 1500 waste pickers who made up the *Swachateche Warkari*. Many of Pune's citizens, unfortunately, viewed it as the 'duty' of some people to collect whatever waste was generated by others, in exchange for the occasional

handout, or they felt that free garbage collection was their due as taxpayers. Segregation of waste by citizens was also unheard of. The waste pickers realised that it would be a long haul to get Pune's citizens to view the door to door waste collector as a professional worker, and themselves as partners in the process of waste collection and disposal.

The entrepreneurial spirit of these pioneer door to door waste collectors has to be lauded – they joined in to shoulder an untried scheme, learned new skills and ways of working (being regular, keeping schedules and timings, handling the huge buckets and heavy push carts, dealing with the municipal drivers, negotiating with citizens), and persisted with their work even when citizens refused to pay the small user fee regularly and when a more remunerative alternative (collection from the bins) was available a short walk away. To be sure, there were drop-outs of *Swachateche Warkari* and some waste pickers went back to free-roaming waste picking. They felt that this door to door collection work was just too much trouble for too little money. Later, when SWaCH proved to be a success, some of these waste pickers came back and joined the organisation as members, which is testimony to the relative stability and support offered by SWaCH against the instability of free-roaming waste picking livelihoods.

SWaCH Sahakari Seva Sastha Maryadit (SWaCH) officially came into existence in 2008 on the basis of a signed formal memorandum with the PMC. The corporation would provide non-monetary support in terms of equipment, vehicles, uniforms, footwear and gloves, etc. as well as cover administrative and other costs. The waste pickers would collect user fees from citizens (Rs. 10-15/ household/month) and retain rights over the recyclable waste which they could sell.

SWaCH was conceived of as an organisation that would always belong to its members, and speak in their voice. It is not a top-down organisation where only the more 'educated' office bearers are the decision-makers and face of the organisation.

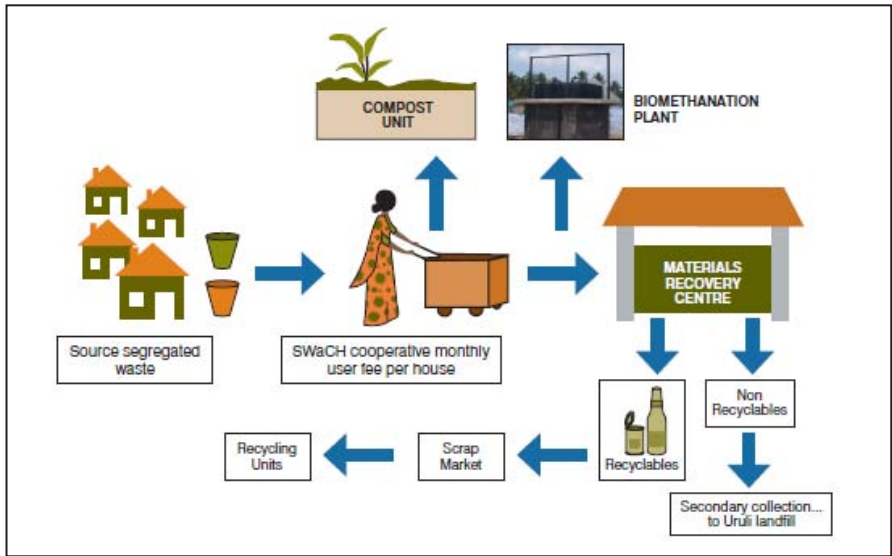
Box 2: A Typical Day in the Life of Members of SWaCH Coop



Long before most of Pune's residents are up, members of SWaCH Coop are preparing for another day of dealing with the city's waste. Before 7 am, SWaCH waste collectors are already trundling their pushcarts through the neighbourhood. Many wear the distinctive blue coats. By mid-day, the 2000 plus door-to-door waste collectors collect, segregate and hand over for transportation the waste from almost 4 lakh households. The afternoon is usually spent recovering recyclables from the dry waste (metal, paper, cloth, plastic, leather etc.) and fine sorting these into categories. Some members also maintain compost pits or handle zero-waste projects for institutions.

Structurally, SWaCH is a workers’ cooperative. All members are working members, not merely shareholders, with women constituting 78% of SWaCH membership. SWaCH bylaws require three fourths of the SWaCH members and two thirds of the Governing Board members to be women. This last requirement was specifically included in order to allow the women to retain control of the organisation – it was noticed that as the door to door collection work made waste picking less back-breaking and filthy and ‘more attractive’, more men (who may have earlier been jobless or unwilling to work) joined their wives/sisters/mothers on the collection rounds and there was always a fear of the cooperative being ‘hijacked’ by their (men’s) interests.

Figure 1: The Movement of Waste from Households in Pune



Maintaining a decentralised structure and ensuring democratic functioning is a real challenge in any mass-based organisation and more so when most members are not literate and all communication has to be oral – but SWaCH office bearers and coordinators recognise that not being able to read and write does not render a waste picker’s opinion/ideas any less worthwhile. Efforts are made to see that the participatory nature of the organisation is maintained, using the Vasti-Kothi-Ward-Board tiered structure.

Apart from the waste collection activities which generate earnings, SWaCH has also tried to make a difference to the quality of its members’ lives. KKPKP has effectively campaigned to eliminate child labour in waste picking in Pune city and SWaCH has taken this further by encouraging more of its members to retain their children in school and send them for higher education. Child marriages are discouraged. Everyday health

issues such as nutrition and mother’s health are attended to. Training programmes may not always be directly related to the practical aspects of work (although these are also given importance through workshops on communication, handling machines, driving lessons etc.) since empowerment and personal growth are seen as integral to the health of the organisation itself.

Sustainability

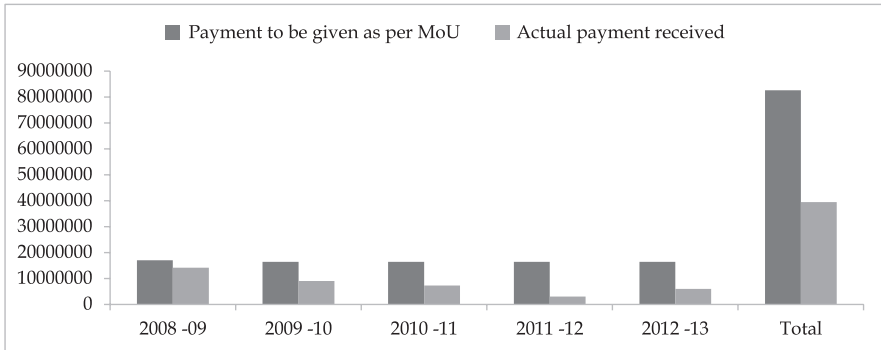
The figures in the Table 1 below show that in comparison to existing schemes in other cities, the SWaCH model is significantly more cost-effective for the Urban Local Body (ULB). This is because the decentralised management and fee collection system, in effect, minimises the overheads inherent in large structures. In any form of contracting out, contractors would need to build in a ‘profit’ margin in order to make their system worthwhile. Here, since the mandate of the organisation is essentially to upgrade the informal sector, the service provider is herself responsible for collection of fees (which again, accrue to her), as a result, cost is lower and efficiency is high.

Table 1: Comparative of User Fee rate (direct) and Rate per Household (HH) per month paid by municipalities to service providers in different cities

| S.No. | Name of City | Service Provider | Rate per HH per month paid directly by municipality (Rs.) | Rate User Fee (Direct) (Rs.) |
|-------|-------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| 1 | Vishakhapattanam | NGOs and Pvt Company | 30/- | 30/- |
| 2 | Nagpur | Kanak Resource Management | 18/- | 10/- |
| 5 | MCD | SPML, Ramky etc | 18/- | 40/- |
| 6 | NDMC | Ramky, NGOs | 18/- | 40/- |
| 9 | Patna | NGOs/Pvt Contractor | 10/- | 30/- |
| 14 | Bhopal | NGO (Alliance of Indian wastepickers member) | 3.8/- | 30/- |
| 15 | Nashik Cantonment Board | NGO | 30/- | |
| 15 | Pune | SWACH | 3.09/- | 10/- |

Over a period of 5 years, the PMC was supposed to spend Rs. 206 per household. Instead, the PMC has spent Rs. 98 per household. The remaining amount has been borne by SWaCH out of 5% contribution made by waste pickers towards running the cooperative. The total amount due from PMC is Rs. 4311840.

Figure 2: Details of Payments Received from the PMC



SWaCH Plus

As primary collection systems got established, SWaCH launched other allied activities under the umbrella of SWaCH Plus value-added services. SWaCH Plus aims at livelihood upgradation, allowing the waste pickers opportunities to work at a ‘higher’ level within the waste sector, or even to branch out into related activities. Since the average working time of a waste picker within SWaCH had reduced to about 4-6 hours per day, many waste pickers were willing to do other work in order to earn an extra thousand rupees per month. SWaCH Plus activities include: collection of unwanted household goods, e-waste through V-Collects; housekeeping; trading in recyclables; composting using mechanised composters and manual composting; bio-methanation plants.

For poor women who are frequently the main earning members of their households, fair remuneration for work, easy credit, and a safe savings scheme are vital. KKP and SWaCH Plus are in the process of growing *Kashtachi Kamai* (Earnings from Labour) Fair Trade Centres. At these centres, recyclable materials are purchased at market prices from members. Payment is immediate and in cash, and receipts are issued for every transaction. Previously, the waste pickers would never be able to prove that they were being cheated or short-changed – although they frequently suspected that this was the case.

The approximately 100 KKP-SWaCH members who sell their scrap at the *Kashtachi Kamai* centres are entitled to profits, calculated as a percentage of daily earnings from sale of scrap. In 2012, *Kashtachi Kamai* distributed a profit share at 18% on the annual earnings of each member. The total amount distributed was Rs. 588559. Members are encouraged to invest some of their returns in the Public Provident Fund or in a money-back insurance policy towards their retirement benefits.

Impact of SWaCH

Livelihood Security

In the pre-SWaCH Coop days, waste pickers' livelihoods were insecure and unstable. Much depended on the continued status quo of the municipality's collection system – any change which took away waste pickers' access to waste, would be disastrous. For example, city planners and citizens' groups would, from time to time, make demands for 'container-free city' or 'zero-garbage wards' – both laudable plans if they were inclusive of waste pickers. But removing the containers without taking into account those who depend on the waste for a living, would be a severe blow to thousands. Contracting out waste collection to private contractors who took away the waste from source, would have a similar impact. So, while working out the formal agreement between SWaCH and PMC clauses were included that would:

- Protect the collectors' continued and unrestrained access to recyclable materials from the point of waste generation, since these are the means of livelihoods.
- Protect the right of the collector to collect, sort, sell and retain earnings from the sale of recyclable materials.
- Permit the collectors to develop enterprises for collection of specific wastes such as e-waste and earn revenue from it.
- Permit the collectors to offer composting and bio-gas maintenance services.
- Earn revenue not only from the sale of recyclables, but also from user fees for providing services.
- Retain scope to negotiate and revise user fee rates.

Box 3: SWaCH Operations at a Glance

Scale

Operational Area: Pune City (PMC jurisdiction)
Coverage: 400000 out of 703,486 households
Slum Coverage: 28,716 out of 54,584

Member data

Member workers: 2,300

Daily worker absenteeism: only 3% of total workers (Jun-Jul 2012)

Three main reasons for absence:

- Death/accident/illness/maternity leave
- (self or family) – 26%
- Out of station – 22%
- Other family-related reasons – 12%

Contribution to SWM

Daily waste collected: 600 tonnes total

Recyclable: 90 tonnes diverted to recycling

Non-recyclable: 90 tonnes (includes recyclable materials for which the market is poor)

(Source: A 2001 Study)

By entering into a partnership with the ULB, SWaCH has managed to protect its members' interests more effectively by holding the ULB accountable for its actions.

Employment Status/Earning Capacity

Waste pickers who joined the cooperative went from being own account/self-employed individual workers to being member-owners of a wholly-owned SWaCH workers' cooperative/collective that can make and distribute surplus to members. They soon also realized the benefits of collective bargaining, using SWaCH as a platform to negotiate with the PMC. As members of SWaCH, waste pickers have also taken advantage of collective bargaining with scrap traders/buyers of recyclables for better rates and terms of trade.

Table 2: Earnings from User Fees (2011-12)

| Monthly earnings from user fees in rupees | % of members |
|---|--------------|
| < 500 | 7 |
| 501-1500 | 30 |
| 1501-2500 | 27 |
| 2500-3500 | 13 |
| >3501 | 23 |

A recent study of Pune's waste pickers found that while about 47% of waste pickers who were not members of SWaCH complained of fallen revenues over the previous year, fixed waste pickers (i.e. SWaCH members) reported more stable revenues.

Financial Benefits to Members

The earnings of SWaCH members are derived from user fees and the sale of recyclable materials that they recover. Residents of apartment blocks are encouraged to pay user fees collectively by cheque. SWaCH members now have access to constructed sorting spaces provided by the PMC. Quite often, they store materials in the sheds as well and sell later, because consolidation fetches better returns. Group sales are also common, with the trader providing the transport and sharing costs.

Box 4 provides a detailed analysis about the the impact of SWaCH on waste pickers' earnings.

Box 4: Economic Benefits to Waste pickers as an Impact of SWaCH

- SWaCH created 2306 decent-work jobs paying Rs. 6000+ monthly
- KKKPK & SWaCH increased member income by at least 30% to over 100%, depending on the member's access to cash and in-kind benefits.
- Reducing middlemen's cheating increased income by 30% (also for many non-members).
- Improved social status gives SWaCH workers access to benefits worth another 18% of income through SWaCH Plus.
- SWaCH Plus - KKKPK scrap shops' dividends increased income by another 18% for waste pickers selling to it.
- Fee income increased hourly earnings by 82% even though waste management income is unchanged (as working hours reduced).
- SWaCH reduced working hours by 45% allowing for more leisure (88% of workers) or add-on part-time jobs (12%). Women pursuing additional work earn Rs. 1000 to 2000 extra (e.g. in SWaCH Plus), equivalent to a further income increase of 20 to 40%.
- Collective annual income earned by SWaCH members from user fees in PMC area is Rs. 55930140
- Average annual earning per capita from user fees is Rs. 30,000 (approx.)
- Average annual earnings coupled with the income from sale of scrap per capita is Rs. 72000.

(Source: Internal Impact Evaluation)

SWaCH members have relatively more stable incomes than other waste pickers in India, and work fewer hours. Most also enjoy a weekly holiday. In addition, the PMC is supposed to provide safety gear, raincoats, footwear, uniforms and collection equipment. Thus, waste pickers now have a claim on some part of the municipal budget, whereas earlier they had none.

Better Living/ Work Conditions

Not all members of KKKPKP were enthusiastic about joining the SWaCH Cooperative. To some, it seemed too close to the sort of supervised, routine, time-bound job that their fiercely independent natures had always shied away from. They preferred to remain as informal, free-roaming waste pickers. But the 3000 or so waste pickers who form the SWaCH membership today are unequivocal about the positive impact it has had on their lives. They acknowledge that clean and dignified working conditions; recognition by citizens as a service-provider; regular work and earnings; pushcarts, gloves, masks and footwear; organizational support for workplace negotiations, loans, education, healthcare etc. have all brought about a sea-change in their lives. The positive changes, from dignity and job security to self-confidence and higher aspirations for oneself and one's family are like ripples in a pond. The case studies in Annexure 2

are eloquent testimony to the impact, as are these remarks by SWaCH members:

Mangal Gaikwad says, “Today I earn Rs. 3000 from doorstep collection



and the sale of scrap. The residents in the area who used to frown at me while I was at the garbage bin, now know my name and greet me. A resident gave me a second hand bicycle. I had never ridden one before. Today, I ride to work on that cycle. When I was a child I used to envy the children who went to school with their bags and water-bottles while I had to go waste picking. Since my work day is shorter now I was able

to attend the literacy class in my slum. I am now literate. I am the Treasurer of the credit co-operative and the representative for my slum. I used to be terrified of my abusive alcoholic husband. Twice I sent him to a de-addiction centre. He stopped for a while but continues to drink. I am no longer terrified of him. I do not give him money to drink. I have bought a bigger house from my savings and a loan I took from the credit co-operative.”



Another SWaCH member, Rupali Kale, who started picking waste as a child and is now determined to educate her children and make sure they have every opportunity that she herself missed, says:

“The help of SWaCH in getting loans, in resolving disputes has been invaluable...Thanks to our *sanstha*, I organise my home better, I look after my family better, and I am careful about cleanliness. I don't even

quarrel as much as I used to.”

Almost 50% of the SWaCH (women) members contribute more than half of the household income. Their regular earnings have made them financially stable. Several SWaCH members now have college-educated children, and almost all children of SWaCH members are in school or have completed school. Interestingly, several of these educated children of waste pickers have joined the cooperative and handle the operational aspects, whether as field workers or office staff.

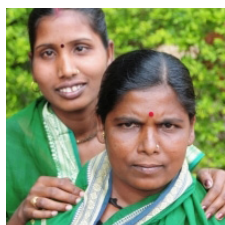
Dignity and Voice as Workers

The story of SWaCH is the story of waste pickers taking up the challenge to transform themselves. Just before SWaCH was launched, they bought “uniforms” – green saris – to establish their intent of becoming service providers. While they have had to unlearn some aspects of behaviour and adapt themselves to others, SWaCH members are clear about what they expect in return for their services:



“If I am going to speak respectfully to you while I collect your garbage, you will also speak respectfully to me.” Says Saru Waghmare, a founder member. “Respect is my right as much as yours.”

Surekha Gaikwad eloquently says, “What is most important is the respect of other people. Today, when I go to the (university) department to collect my money, the lady there asks me to sit on a sofa. If she is drinking tea, she will ask for another cup for me... That is what I value the most.”



SWaCH members, dalit women from impoverished backgrounds, most unschooled, are today confident enough to voice their opinions on their work, its impact on climate change, their contribution to the city. Apart from the many conversations they have had and continue to have with citizens’ groups in Pune on the topic of waste segregation and eco-friendly waste handling and disposal, they have also taken public positions in the past to protest against sexual harassment, to campaign for their children’s right to education, and in support of the campaign for universal pensions.

SWaCH members have spoken out at conferences in Copenhagen, Bangkok, Rio and all over India. Certainly, the change in the way they perceive themselves and are perceived by others is directly related to the change in the way they work – from insecure informal waste pickers to members of a workers’ cooperative which ensures that they work in safe and dignified conditions.

Every time one more victory is won, self-confidence and self-esteem are further bolstered. For example, recently, waste pickers successfully got their occupation added to the list of ‘unclean occupations’ after a decade-long struggle. Their children can now apply for pre-Matric government scholarships available for children of those working in ‘unclean occupations’.

This campaign was spearheaded by a waste picker, Rahi Ingle, who first drew the union’s attention to the scheme. For ten years, the Government of India ignored their demands. Rahi’s earlier attempt to register her son for the scholarship came to a dead-end when her application was discarded because ‘waste picking’ was not specifically mentioned in the scheme. “Well now it is!” says Rahi triumphantly. “And I will make sure my son gets the scholarship.”

Contribution as Workers to the City

SWaCH member Baby Mohite is very clear about how the door to door waste collection work that she does impacts the city she lives in:



“What would this city be without us? Whether as door to door collectors or roaming waste pickers – we remove a huge amount of rubbish and if we didn’t, it would be there, piling up on the streets and in the gutters... The corporation would not be able to manage without us...the gutters would be choked with plastic bottles... I feel so proud when I see the clean streets and know that we SWaCH members are responsible for this.”

Challenges

Today, the main challenges confronting the organisation are finding a creative response to the threat to livelihoods by non-inclusive privatisation of the waste sector; continuing the partnership with the ULB in a non-confrontational manner despite repeated renegeing on commitments; and campaigning for increased social security measures for waste pickers.

Increasingly, waste pickers voice the opinion that ‘everyone has realised that waste is gold’. The waste pickers face the possibility of loss of work due to several issues – firstly, the drive towards ‘container/dumpster-free’ cities; secondly, competition from contractors who are entering the waste collection business but who do not share the larger goals of SWaCH such as welfare of waste pickers, environmentally-sound practices, etc.; thirdly, advent of large multi-crore Waste to Energy and incineration projects that make big promises to the city’s administrators but are yet to prove themselves efficient over a period of time.

As far as social security goes, SWaCH members have been part of the Pension Parishad campaign for universal pensions. Comprehensive health insurance, disability benefits and old age pension schemes are being worked out.

Conclusion

The SWaCH model can truly be called path-breaking because it has imaginatively built on the strengths of the informal sector to link an age-old problem (garbage collection and disposal) to upgrading the lives of a marginalised community.

It has also busted a few myths along the way. Few in Pune would have been willing to lay their money on a scheme that reposed confidence in a community (waste pickers), widely seen as socially irresponsible,

dishonest, dirty, unreliable, etc. to manage a civic service that required its workers to be responsible, regular, meticulous, cooperative. And yet, those are the very words that citizens' testimonials use to describe SWaCH members.

Another widely-held belief was that waste was not 'our problem', it was the corporation's problem – SWaCH has led citizens to accept some responsibility for what, where and how they dispose waste. In this sense, it is truly participatory in nature.

And perhaps most importantly in a deeply-stratified society, SWaCH has allowed poor women to *script their own* success story, on their own terms and with full ownership.

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ANNEXURE 1

Salient Features of the Pune Municipal Corporation-SWaCH Partnership in Pune City

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Signed in October 2008

Nature of arrangement: Pro-poor public private partnership

Main tasks: Door to door collection of source segregated domestic waste; maintenance of separate streams

Collection of road sweepings, biomedical waste excluded

Collection of garden waste, construction and demolition waste, e-waste on payment of user fees

Mode of collection: Manual push carts (small motorized vehicles introduced in difficult terrain)

Workers involved: Two workers for 200-300 households, offices, shops, other establishments

User fee: From all classes of users

User fee amount: Usually Rs.10 to Rs.30 per household per month depending upon certain variables; in slums Rs.15 per household per month

Collection from slums: To be part subsidized but this clause not implemented

Rights over recyclables: Collectors have rights over recyclables and retain income from sale of scrap

Provision of collection equipment and safety gear: Pune Municipal Corporation

Office, infrastructure and resource recovery centres: Pune Municipal Corporation

Terms of payment: Operational grant to cover management costs and some operational costs reducing annually

Worker benefits: to be provided by Pune Municipal Corporation but only nominal medical insurance cover provided

Complaint and customer care helpline: Operated by SWaCH

Performance indicators: Specified in agreement

ANNEXURE 2

Profiles of SWaCH members

Suman More



Suman More is a proud mother. Her son has completed his Bachelor in Arts, a diploma in journalism and is currently pursuing his Masters degree.

This did not come easily to Suman, a waste picker in Pune city, India. Her parents had migrated to Pune from their village in search of work and began waste picking. She started waste picking with them when she was around 13 years old. Suman married Mr. More at the age of fourteen and had her 4th child when she turned 22. Their main source of income was waste picking. Suman's husband also earned money by performing on traditional drums and conducting religious ceremonies. However income from these activities was sporadic and irregular.

When Suman started work, she would pick up recyclable waste on the roadside, in local waste depositories or public waste bins provided by the Pune Municipal Corporation. She walked long distances and worked from dawn to dusk. Her children helped to sort the waste at home as sorted scrap fetched a better price.

In 1992-93 organizers of KKPKP trade union of waste pickers came to her community to talk about the need to organize waste workers. They explained that the benefits of organizing included getting access to waste at source, fewer hours of work for the same amount of money, cleaner working conditions, insurance etc. Many of her neighbours discouraged her becoming a member saying that these benefits are utopian and that it was a new way for some people to make money!!! However, she decided to join KKPKP with a few other people in the community and has never regretted her decision.

Now, her working conditions have improved. Suman explains, "I work only 4 hours for more money, since I collect the waste from door to door. The quality and condition of waste is much better." Door to door collection has other benefits. She builds relationships with people and engages in casual conversation over a cup of tea. Coming from a lower caste and class of society she never thought this would happen in her lifetime. She is happy that she is able to have a proper lunch break and that they are provided with soap to wash their hands and legs before they sit to have lunch in a cool, clean place in the residential complex where she works. A higher income has also meant that she can afford proper medical care instead of self-medicating with the help of a pharmacist to avoid going to the doctor.

Suman no longer takes the waste home to sort. The municipal corporation has provided a sorting shed where several waste pickers gather to sort their waste while engaging in conversation and easy banter lightening up their day. Once she goes home, she has time now to watch some television to ease off the day's hard work.

As a member of KKPKP Suman took an oath to educate her children, and enlisted the help of KKPKP to enroll her children in school. Both her first and last sons have received cash prizes from KKPKP for their achievements. Her daughter-in-law is a computer engineer from a Brahmin (upper caste) family for whom she wants to be a good mother-in-law. She married her daughter only after she turned eighteen and did not give dowry, she smiles proudly.

Baida Babu Gaikwad

Baida Babu Gaikwad lives in the Mahatma Phule Vasti in Hadapsar. Baida Babu Gaekwad began waste picking in the Wagholi area when she was only ten years old. Needless to say, she is illiterate. Her husband, Babu, began drinking when he was fifteen years old and never left the bottle since then. As with all drunkard men, Babu would come home drunk and quarrel with the family members every single day. There was not a day of peace.

In 1993, the waste pickers' union KKPKP, was formed and Baida became one of its initial members. After a few years, the union began engaging its members in informal door to door waste collection work. This was expected to improve the working conditions of waste pickers, as they got access to segregated wet and dry waste, and also improve their income, as they got a user fees from the citizens. Baida bai thus started door to door collection work in Sattawadi, Hadapsar in 2001. She earned Rs. 2000 from user fees and about Rs. 2000 from the sale of scrap. She worked there for three years when, impressed by her ability to work hard and maintain good relations with citizens, she was given a row of houses in the posh new development at Magarpatta. She began with only ten houses from which she earned Rs. 200 per month and about the same amount from the sale of scrap. However, the area held potential as it was developing fast and large housing societies, abodes of the rich, were coming up fast.

In 2008, with the formation of SWaCH – Baida bai became a member of the co-operative of waste pickers officially authorized to engage in door to door collection of waste in the city of Pune. Baida bai's work increased as she began serving housing societies. 'The PMC supported us, gave us pushcarts and buckets. It made sure the Ghanta gaadi came on time to clear the waste.'

By 2009, her daughter joined her in her work and the following year, her husband also joined in. They would go out to work together in the

morning and come back together in the evening. Yet, at home there was no peace. Her husband continued to drink day and night and engage in abuse and bitter quarrels at home.

Today, Baida bai along with her husband and daughter serves five large residential societies and a large private hospital in the Magarpatta area of Hadapsar. They also compost the wet waste in two of these societies. They earn around Rs. 13000 as user fees for waste collection and composting and another Rs. 7500 from the sale of scrap each month.

They own a large tempo which runs outside Pune and brings in another Rs. 10000 per month. They purchased another smaller tempo to help them in their door to door collection work. It allows them to cover a larger area in lesser time.

Her husband stopped drinking six months ago and has not touched alcohol since then. Her son studied till class tenth and works as a casual labourer. Her twenty years old daughter, Reshma works with her. The three of them, Baida bai, Babu and Reshma work hard from six in the morning to three in the afternoon – collecting waste, segregating wet and dry waste, sorting out the recyclables, never taking a break, not even on Sundays. ‘What will the citizens do with their waste if we don’t turn up even a single day?’, asks Baida bai.

Satvashila Potekar

Satvashila Potekar is forty years old. Her mother is a waste picker; her two sons live at a boarding school for poor children; her husband, an alcoholic construction worker, had abandoned his family many years ago. She lives in Khedegaon, a neighbourhood in the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC).



“When Sangeeta John, the local SWaCH coordinator, asked me if I wanted to learn driving I told her that I didn’t know how to open the door of a truck. She expected me to learn how to drive the thing! But she insisted

that I take the course and I did. We went to the Regional Transport Office twice to take the driver's test. I passed on my third attempt. This was in August last year."

In the SWaCH PCMC model, waste-collection is done by independent teams consisting of two waste-pickers and a driver. Each team collects waste on an assigned route from approximately two thousand houses every day. The waste-pickers sort recyclable waste and transfer the rest at designated 'feeder points' to PCMC-run compactors for transport to the Moshi landfill.

"My mother could have worked with me. She still collects waste, sorts it and sells it. But she is too old for this work. I don't think she can climb on to the back of the truck at all. If she could, we could have been a team! If family members, or relatives or neighbours create teams then profit-sharing is not a problem." Forcing a profit-sharing arrangement on the team is an option that SWaCH does not want to pursue since it is likely to worsen the relationships between team members. The organisation reasons that waste-pickers must reach their own conclusions about the composition of their team and balance the prospects of higher profits versus the potential termination of their services – each team's performance is evaluated every month and residents' feedback is an important criterion. In other words, they must learn to realign, restructure or even rebuild their business model based on feedback.

Though Satvashila was a member of the KKPKP union, she too was not immediately welcomed into a team. She had to win the confidence of her colleagues. "When I got my licence no one wanted me on their team because they were afraid that my driving skills were not good enough. They were scared that I might crash the truck and they would lose their route. I did not lose hope," said Satvashila. A year passed. She worked as a wastepicker and maintained her driving skills by parking trucks and filling in for regular drivers who had called in sick. In July 2011, Satvashila was finally accepted by the team that worked on Route No. 16.

SWaCH hopes that Satvashila and her team will act as role models for their colleagues. At present, of the one hundred and nineteen drivers on SWaCH's rolls, twenty are waste-pickers. Six of these are women. SWaCH hopes that waste-pickers will encourage other members from their community to learn driving and join their team. Many waste-pickers on the SWaCH PCMC routes have been inspired by Satvashila's achievements. And a few take informal driving lessons too.

After analysing six months of consumer feedback and profits on all its routes, SWaCH is convinced that over the next two years all teams will groom and then hire a woman waste-picker as their driver. External funding will be used to buy a tipper-truck and hire a driving instructor. Apart from driving practice, they will also learn basic repair skills.

Older waste-pickers like Satvashila's mother could use this truck for less strenuous work like newspaper collection or as a short-distance (sorting shed to scrap shop) transport. Further, these relatively easier assignments would help inexperienced drivers hone their road-skills before moving on to the more demanding door-to-door work.

"My mother is a roving waste-picker," said Satvashila. "Strangely, though I work in the same business in the same neighbourhoods, my life is completely different!"

Sanjha Prayas Ajeevika Karyakram Savda Ghevera Resettlement Colony

Pranav Singh and Siddhartha Pandey

Introduction

Savda Ghevera provides a marginal civic experience. Families that were resettled here were provided with a small plot of land of either twelve square meters or eighteen square meters size. Water arrives by tankers, which are irregular. The general health is compromised by the lack of any holistic sanitation strategy, and the site is so far from the city that commuting to work is both difficult and expensive. When the original residents from Yamuna Pusta, Nagla Machi, Khan Market and Airport arrived here in 2006, they found just barren land. It is difficult to imagine how these families managed to create a township in this far-flung place where nothing existed – no bus connectivity, no water supply, no drains and sewers, and most importantly, no livelihood opportunity (Figure 1). Home to around eight thousand families in

2008, it is likely to hold some twenty thousand families in the coming years, making it the biggest resettlement colony in Delhi. Faced with these conditions, residents were compelled to continue to commute to their old jobs in the city, at considerable cost. The insufficient economic opportunities affected the residents, particularly the womenfolk, who lost their jobs as domestic workers. Housing in Savda Ghevera is characterized by self-built poor quality housing ranging from *chattai* houses and one-storeyed *chadar* houses to consolidated simple two-level-and-roof-terrace lintel constructions built over time (Pictures 1 and 2).

Picture 1 and 2: Savda Ghevera in the year 2009



Figure 1: Challenges Faced in Order of Severity



Entry of CURE

Realizing the adverse conditions of people in Savda Ghevra, and prodded by the accompanying political and social hue and cry, the Government of Delhi associated the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) with Savda Ghevra in year 2008 under its 'Bhagidari' scheme to facilitate efficient delivery of basic services. This provided the opportunity for CURE to initiate its activities in Savda Ghevra.

Initially, CURE keenly observed the situation to assess the core problems of people and look for solutions. Livelihood emerged as a key priority in Savda Ghevra along with the need for a mode of transport for people to commute to the city. After working for a year with Bhagidari, CURE's initial breakthrough came when Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) agreed to start plying its bus fleet on the streets of Savda Ghevra. This was the first result of community work and persistent dialogue with the officials. By that time, CURE was beginning to be recognized for the efforts and work done with the Savda community. Aid came from the Jamshetji Tata Trust, a premier non-governmental organization (NGO) with the mandate of creating livelihood opportunities for people and promoting sustainable livelihoods among families for bringing about a significant reduction in their poverty levels.

Challenges faced by residents

Consultations with the community indicated that the major livelihood issue was the considerable distance of economic opportunities from the new site which affected all residents in every way. Men and women who continued to commute to their old jobs in the city bore a considerable cost on transportation. A survey showed that the family incomes fell by as much as 30%. People also lacked skills for seeking any new employment. Young children were forced out of school into work. There was an increase in dropouts from schools and the future employability among the young was being adversely affected. The situation was worsened due to the inadequate infrastructure in the settlements, i.e. water and power supply, transport and roads. All this was impairing the potential for micro-enterprise development. Apart from this, the lack of legal tenure and inability of the legal finance sector to recognize these people resulted in subsequent challenges, given the limited funds with CURE.

Initial interventions

With the objectives defined, CURE initiated its journey of setting up of micro-enterprises by igniting the minds of the community with the idea of livelihoods that could be managed by the people, especially women, from within their households in the time which they got after completing their daily chores. The concept was well received by a few people, who joined the efforts of CURE. Based on the skills, past experiences and willingness of people to start new enterprises, three micro-enterprises were set up

in the year 2009. One of the enterprises was bag making, the second was cookie making and third was door-to-door (D2D) waste collection. The first two were goods-based models and the third was a service-delivery enterprise. The D2D waste-collection enterprise was an instant success. The enterprise grew from a turnover of Rs. 2100 per month to Rs. 25000 per month in a span of two and a half years (Picture 3). On the other hand, the goods-based enterprises did not fare well, with reason. It was apparent that such enterprises required better market linkages, increased efficiency in production and better quality of products to be able to sustain. Over a year's time, CURE failed to sustain the goods-based enterprises. The cookie-making enterprise was discontinued. The bag-making enterprise suffered losses due to unacceptability of inferior quality products by the market and increased cost of material due to the distant location of markets.

Picture 3: D2D Waste Collector at Work



This failure underlined two lessons for CURE. One was the need to create better skills and craftsmanship in the groups. The other was to have good market linkups. CURE, therefore, set up a training cell for women, youth and children from Savda that enabled them to get training in their area of interest. This would allow them to be more stable once they entered into business. People were thus also provided with the choice to decide on their future endeavours.

Skill Training

A series of skill-training programmes were undertaken (Table 1). Certifications were provided by various professional institutions. Students who underwent skill training in marketing were clubbed as a group to link up enterprise groups to the market and bring important leads for the groups to get more orders. A placement cell was created to improve the absorption of the skilled labour in the market. Assessment of the market was done and all the possible activities and enterprises were explored.

Table 1: Details of Skill-training Programmes

| Employment Training Detail | |
|--|----------------------|
| Type of Training | Number of Candidates |
| Hospital Attendant Training Program | 46 |
| Mobile Repairing Trainees | 8 |
| Delhi Tourism | 5 |
| Screen Printing | 14 |
| Gym Instructor | 9 |
| Hair Dresser | 7 |
| Masons Training | 72 |
| Maruti Driving Training | 16 |
| Paper Plates making | 7 |
| Paper Bag making | 24 |
| Stitching and Cutting Training | 10 |
| Housekeeping | 2 |
| In-shop Demonstration | 11 |
| Information Technology Enabled Service | 7 |
| Electrician Training | 4 |
| Computer Training | 5 |
| Market Cell | 6 |
| Total | 253 |

Strategy

Once the series of trainings and skill building of various groups was concluded, it was time for CURE to develop a strategy that would allow these groups to start their own enterprises. CURE once again looked out to people venturing into newer and unconventional models for livelihoods, e.g. D2D waste collection. In two years the D2D waste collection activity which was started with a capital of only Rs. 6000 had spread over five blocks, earning a decent Rs. 25000 per month. This demonstrated that service-delivery enterprises had a greater chance of succeeding in the long term.

While CURE was exploring various strategies to decide on the proper strategy to set up new enterprises, the concept of *interlinked livelihoods* emerged. This meant setting up of livelihoods which would complement the existing livelihoods of D2D waste collection and bag making. The idea behind this strategy (which worked successfully) was to interlink the limited resources existing in Savda so as to foster interdependence of the enterprises and at the same time create a safety net for these groups/enterprises. D2D waste collection was linked to a vermin-composting

unit that could process the organic waste into manure through the use of earthworms. Screen printing was initially set up as an independent enterprise but would now also support the printing and designing of paper and cloth bags for another enterprise, file/folders and envelope making enterprise with masala and detergent making groups, etc. What it did best was to reduce the dependence of the enterprises on the external market sources, which brought about a significant change in the working of the groups.

Picture 4: Photos of Different Enterprises Started by Sanjha Prayas Ajeevika Karyakram



Moving Ahead

Cure continued to move ahead with this concept of *interlinked livelihoods*, keeping in mind the need for skill training to ensure quality and market survey to assess and generate demand. The group on candle making was restarted after the group members went through a training programme on candle making conducted by professionals. *Diyas* and candles were prepared and sold during the Deepawali season after connecting the group with a few internet marketing sites such as azureonline, homestory, etc. A group was started to establish a paper-bag unit on demand from the market (by this time plastic bags had been banned in Delhi). A paper-plate unit was established after assessing the demand from the market. A sewing group was also formed to support the bag-making enterprise to cope with the increase in orders. Apart from these, CURE also set up a skilled masonry group certified by the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation (DSIDC) after seeing the huge demand for construction.

Enterprises making beads, *shagun* envelopes, file folders and home-made masala were also formed. By the start of year 2011, CURE had set up enterprises as can be seen in **Table 2**.

Shudh Jal Ghar Samiti

The Shudh Jal Ghar Samiti, again a service-delivery model, was created to deliver safe drinking water to the residents of Savda Ghevra . This innovative entrepreneurial concept was started in the year 2011 by CURE. At present, it serves two hundred and fifty households on a daily basis in Savda, providing pure water from door-to-door on a 24/7 basis. It is run by the family of one Bhawari Devi (**Pictures 5 and 6**). The people who are using this service have recommended it to others and subscribers are increasing continuously.

Picture 5: Bhawari Devi of Shudh Jal Ghar Samiti



Picture 6: Bhawari Devi's son preparing a cart for delivery of water jars



Sanjha Prayas Ajeevika Karyakram

The idea of creating multiple enterprises that are linked to each other and are self-dependent in nature was taken forward with great zeal both by the team and the people associated with the various enterprises. While this model improved the livelihoods and marginally helped overcome the pre-existing challenges, it also came with its own set of accountabilities. As these enterprises were growing and beginning to carry out responsibilities on their own, it was very important to hold these enterprises together. This was all the more important since it was well known that CURE would not be present to assist these enterprises on any issues that may arise in future. There was a need for having a larger group, a society having the representation of all enterprises which could be responsible for management and efficient functioning of all the groups, decide on issues and help to sustain the livelihoods. Hence, in January 2013, a society was formed under the name of Sanjha Prayas Ajeevika Karyakram (SPAK) and

registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Under monitoring by CURE, this group is now being strengthened to be well-versed in all aspects of the job, such as supervising marketing of goods, arranging training to the groups, etc. SPAK has registered itself with various online marketing agencies such as Justdial and Home store for a better output.

Sustainability

As a long-term planning and to sustain different cost-intensive activities within groups, CURE created a self-sustaining fund which was called the Livelihood Revolving Fund (LRF). LRF capital of Rs. 250000 was created out of the project funds by CURE. The responsibility of supervising the money rests on SPAK, and is to be used to fund enterprises, help set up other enterprises and for sustenance of the existing groups.

Financial Outlay

CURE has spent approximately Rs. 11500000 on livelihood activities over a period of five years. During this time, CURE has focused on mobilizing and facilitating groups and the people of Savda. For this purpose, CURE hired a team of six qualified professionals with different specialties to work permanently in the field, at a cost of about Rs. 3700000 over five years. Thus, the total annual cost incurred in setting up of enterprises, developing the products, paying the team of consultants, arranging training and workshops, etc. works out to approximately Rs. 3040000.

Impact

The average household income per month in SPAK has grown from a meager Rs. 2300 in the year 2006 to approximately Rs. 7000 as on date. Households have even started saving a small amount of Rs. 250 per month, a clear indicator of improved economic standing. These numbers may seem meager, but given the scale and enormity of challenges that residents of Savda face, these numbers demonstrate a successful collective effort by a community and an organization that can lead towards creating sustainable livelihood pathways. The challenges are unending and issues will always occur. The only factor that can lead to success is the will to get up and go, and succeed. The Savda enterprises demonstrate one such case of continuous struggle by people to achieve their goal and enthusiasm for making their lives better.

The Way Forward

CURE's involvement in the exercise has now come to an end. As a sustainability measure, CURE is planning to set up a managing and facilitating unit in the *basti*. The members of this unit would include a professional from CURE and representatives from the SPAK team. The

unit would be responsible for helping the SPAK team in forming strategies for further improvement as well as to tackle any issues or problems that may surface later.

The next step for CURE is to replicate and test the model in different settings such as the Bawana resettlement colony. At present, CURE has replicated the water kiosk project in Agra and is planning to implement a similar one in East Delhi. CURE has also replicated its D2D and composting projects in various other slums of Delhi and Agra.

Conclusion

There are many ways of helping a deprived community. The easiest of them is to simply provide the community with houses and infrastructure. However, past instances show that in many cases, these models have failed as the slum dwellers sell the new property and move back to the slums. This is because of the increased social costs at the newer site, which is often absent in the resettlement strategy. Therefore, without a holistic approach that deals with creating social infrastructure, livelihoods, etc. in tandem with creating the required infrastructure, the resettled people may get short-term benefits but long-term benefits are uncertain.

After having understood the exact nature of the problems being faced by Savda residents, CURE decided to use an approach which would result in the overall development of the community as well as make the residents self-reliant or inter-dependent on each other instead of being dependent on outsiders. In this way, the solution would be long-term and have a greater impact on their lives.

In an effort to make the groups capable of challenging the market competition, CURE has ensured that every group undergoes training programmes in skill enhancement, account maintenance, quality management and production management by varied professionals and key trainers available in the market. This capacity building has led to a wholesome development of the community and self-reliance among its residents. It has given them a new perspective on life and its possibilities. They now enjoy a better standard of living and have greater aspirations and more confidence.

Income Detail of Enterprise Groups

Figure 2: Income Details of Enterprise Groups

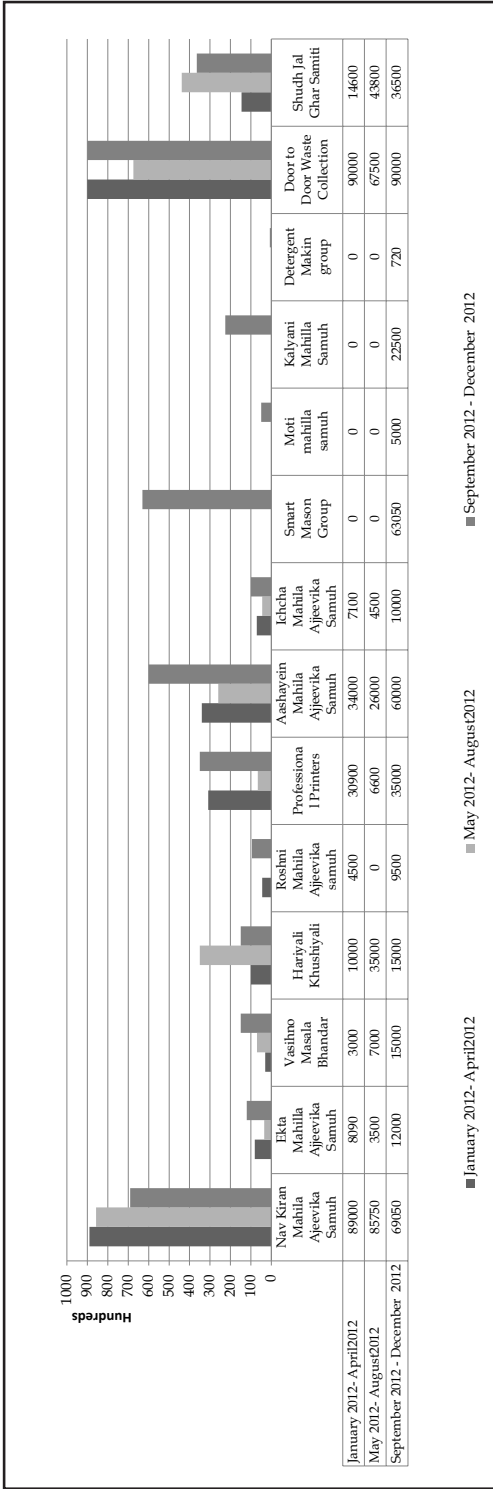


Table 2: Details of Enterprises

| S. No. | Name of the group | Activity undertaken | Year in which the enterprise was established | Total number of members in the group | Name of the exporters/clients | Total vendors | Annual turnover (Rs, in thousand) |
|--------|---------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Nav Kiran Mahila Ajeevika Samuh | Stitching work of all types of bags and other accessories like pads, cushion covers and file folders | 2008 | 32 | Cobb Pvt. Ltd. Shivam Saree Shop Shyam Bakery Mahalaksmi Saree Shop Bombay Saree Shop Vinod Bag House Parveen Emporium Can Support Arora Bakery Garg Enterprises Ess Tee Creations | 10 | 244 |
| 2 | Ekta Mahila Ajeevika Samuh | All types and sizes of paper plates and bowls | 2011 | 6 | Sudhir Kumar, Begumpur Unify Disposable Shubham Enterprises, Seeraspur Shiv Sortex Pvt. Ltd. | 4 | 23 |
| 3 | Vasihno Masala Bhandar | Grinding and packaging of all types of spices | 2012 | 8 | Savdaghra, Nangloi Apni Rasoi, Rohini Hum Sabki Rasoi Aggarwal Sweet Corner | 4 | 25 |
| 4 | Ghar Ghar Kura Sangreh Samuh | Household waste collection | 2008 | 5 | Savda Ghevra households | 1200 | 360 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------------|------|-----|--|---|----|---|------|---|---|----|---|------|---|---|----|---|------|----|---|----|
| 5 | Hariyali Khushi-yali | Vermi compost | 2011 | 2 | Swati Enterprises Mishni Universal Enterprises, Patparganj Shubham Enterprises, Seeraspur Jitoshha Shiv Gramodyog Sanstha Arushi Gramudyog Pvt. Ltd. Kissan Organics Provincial Associates, NOIDA Azure Online Pvt. Ltd. Friends Handicraft, Pravesh Ratn Creative Candles Ambika Nagar, DSS NKMAS Arora Bakery Garg Enterprises | 8 | 60 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | 6 | 2010 | 4 | 4 | 14 | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 2008 | 5 | 3 | 73 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 2011 | 24 | 3 | 42 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 2011 | 1 | 146 | 263 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11 | 2012 | 6 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | 2013 | 4 | 2 | 63 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | 2012 | 6 | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | 2012 | 4 | 2 | 23 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Training to Enable Livelihood and Employment

Amitabh Rath, Ravi Bhushan, Amresh Deshpande and Ankur Tulsyan

Background

With a population of over 1.2 billion people, India is the second most populous country in the world and projections suggest that we will be the most populated country by 2050. More than 50% of today's population is below the age of twenty five and more than 65% below the age of thirty five¹.

Looking at the education sector in India, there are Primary, Secondary and Higher Education structures. Reports suggest that there are over 1.25 lakh secondary schools and 22 crore children go to school in India. Of these, only around 12% students reach the university level. A large part of the eighteen to twenty four years age group in India does not reach college.

Considering that we are a 'young' workforce, the requirement for skilled manpower is going to increase many folds in the years to come. Though approximately 13 million persons enter the job market every year, only 3 million vocational training seats are available in country². A report published by Boston Consulting Group quotes that vocationally trained, diploma holders, and graduates comprise only 10% of the overall workforce.

The Government is taking proactive steps to fill the existing skill gap. The private sector too is undertaking several initiatives through industry led training programs to meet the requirement of trained manpower. In one such industry led initiative, Schneider Electric India Foundation (SEIF) has launched an electrician training program in partnership with different NGOs and NPO across many states of the country such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The program provides education and employment opportunities for the urban youth and entrepreneurial opportunities in the rural areas. This in turn serves the purpose of promoting safe and reliable electric installation. Employment wise, more than seven thousand and five hundred trained electricians have been able to find jobs. The goal of this program is to train at least fifty thousand people as skilled electrician in the country by 2015.

How this initiative of Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation has changed the lives of youth living in urban slums around rapidly developing Gurgaon, led to employment of over on hundred youth and improved the quality of life for their families over the past two years is something that will be covered in this case.

¹ Census of India - 2011

² Ministry of Human Resource Development - A challenge faced by a developing India

A Partnership to Transform the Lives of Youth through Imparting Skills Training

About Schneider Electric and Schneider Electric India Foundation

Schneider Electric is a global specialist in Energy Management. Headquartered in France, it has operating units across the globe. Schneider Electric India Pvt Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Schneider Electric France. In India, Schneider Electric has about seventeen thousand employees employed in thirty one factories. Schneider Electric's global turnover in 2012 was more than € 24 billion.

Schneider Electric India Foundation is a trust registered in 2008. Its principal office is located in Bengaluru. The mission of SEIF is "to help people change their lives through Access to Energy". The training programme of SEIF is aligned to the global program BIPBOP which is an acronym for Business-Innovation-People for Base of Pyramid. The activities undertaken by SEIF are around five themes:

- Education
- Employment
- Electrification
- Entrepreneurship
- Emergency during Natural Disasters

About SNS Foundation

Operating from Gurgaon, SNS Foundation was institutionalized as a family trust in the mid seventies (1976) by Anand Automotive Ltd. The Mission of the Foundation is to enlarge benefactor pool for working towards:

- Education
- Health
- Livelihoods
- Natural Resource Management
- Governance

Taking cue from India's demographic dividend of a relatively large and young workforce (35% below twenty years), majority of whom do not have access to quality school and college/vocational education, making them largely unemployable, SNSF has accorded top priority to enhancing employability of youth through skills training.

The Place for Action: Gurgaon, Haryana

With a burgeoning population of over 1.5 million, Gurgaon is the second largest city of Haryana. It is also a part of NCR. The Delhi - Jaipur Highway (NH - 8) passes through the city dividing it into the upscale areas of newly constructed offices and high rises and the west which is Old

Gurgaon. The State Government of Haryana has notified twenty two slums in Gurgaon, which have become the centre of community involvement activity for SNS Foundation. The team members of SNF studied the problems faced by the inhabitants of slum. Education came to the forefront along with high incidence of unemployment amongst youth.

The Partnership

Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation partnered to undertake the initiative to improve the lives of youth coming from slums by providing them with skills in the Basic Electrician Course, to enable them to earn their livelihoods.

To execute the programme, the two organisations entered into an MoU on May 16, 2012 to partner towards imparting basic electricians training course at SNSF training centre in Gurgaon. This training became operational from October 2012 and the first batch started with twenty three students from nearby slums.

Roles and Responsibility

SEIF's core competence as knowledge partner and SNS Foundation's expertise as the implementation partner provided the right formula for a successful partnership.

Schneider Electric India Foundation provided the basic course curriculum and the necessary lab infrastructure. SEIF also conducted Train-the-Trainer of the faculty appointed by SNS Foundation.

Once the programme was launched, SNS Foundation team conducted mobilization drives in the local community area, speaking of the problems that the youth faced because of lack of employable skills and how this training programme could bring about a turnaround in their lives and enable them to earn a decent livelihood out of electrical installation jobs. The team placed advertisements through local cable TV operators, banners on auto-rickshaws, and undertook community awareness drives. Counseling was also undertaken for family members of the local youth so that they could be influenced to undergo training.

The Skilling Process

The program began with the selection of candidates. For the technician training, the person must be ITI qualified and should have passed standard twelfth. For entrepreneurship, candidates must additionally, be graduates. For the electrician training program, the candidate must be standard eighth to standard twelfth passed or a dropout.

Candidates selected as a result of the mobilisation drive were invited to the SNS Foundation Training Centre located in Sector 14 Gurgaon, where they

were underwent an induction programme for the course. Twenty three students then participated in this journey of transformation.

The entire course was of four months duration divided into 3 months of classroom and practical sessions and one month of On-Job-Training. The course content is extensive. The trainees were taught the basics of house and building wiring along with electrical safety. There was an introduction to electrical products and handling of tool and instruments. The candidates learnt how to monitor the electrical installation in residential and commercial building and then troubleshoot in case of any malfunction. They were also exposed to renewable energy solutions through training on solar energy solutions.

The medium of delivery was Hindi. In addition to their technical skills, the candidates were also provided an opportunity to hone their written as well as oral English to improve their communication skills.

To add on to their theoretical learning, the trainees also worked on the electrical boards in the lab where they were taught to carry out electrical installations in household and domestic infrastructure. They were also taught on various household appliances which they were likely to encounter in the course of their employment.

Given the industry networks of SNS Foundation, the trainees were also exposed to practical aspects during On-Job-Training. They were taken on field visits to various construction sites where electrical installations were being carried out. This reinforced their understanding of various aspects of the job by observing it in field.

Changing the Youth's Attitude

The faculty and SNS Foundation team faced a major challenge in getting a regular attendance of trainees. To counter this, the experienced faculty for electrical course also took sessions on motivation. The operational tactic of conducting theory and practical classes on the day's topic on the same day proved to be instrumental in improving the attendance. Trainees began to realize that complete involvement led to better understanding.

Linkages to Employment

There was no point in training the youth in a livelihood generating skill without providing them with employment at the end of course. For this, SNS Foundation engaged its placement team to reach out to prospective employers and share with them about the programme. By virtue of an excellent industry presence, SNS Foundation began tapping into the manufacturing units and real estate developers around Gurgaon. Prospective employers were invited to the campus where they observed the entire training process. This gave them confidence in the programme and the trainees. Having their corporate headquarter in Gurgaon also provided an excellent scope to Schneider employees to visit the centre and

interact with the trainees. The students were positively encouraged on hearing the experiences of senior officials from the company. Internally too, SNS Foundation reached out to the group companies of Anand Group and shared the nuances of the programme.

Certification and Employment

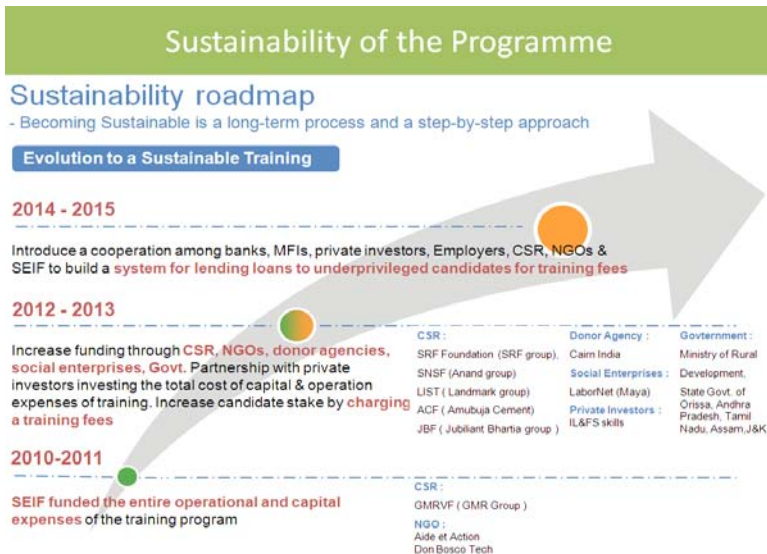
After the successful completion of the course, the students were jointly certified by Schneider Electric India Foundation and SNS Foundation. More than 60% of the students were placed in various organisations in and around Gurgaon. This early success aided in spreading the word of the positive impact of the programme in the local community.

Key Aspects of Training Programme

Sustainability

SEIF firmly believes that sustainability is a long-term process a step-by-step approach. Since its inception in 2010, the training programme has been evolving to make sustainability its focus. From entire funding of operational and capital expenses in beginning, the model has been following a step-by-step approach to sustainability through leveraging funding from CSR, NGOs, donor agencies, social enterprises and government programme. It also aims to increase the candidates' stake by charging training fees. The next evolutionary phase involves forging a co-operation among banks, MFIs, private investors and the above mentioned contributors wherein these players along with SEIF could build together a system for lending loans to underprivileged candidates undertaking the course.

Figure 1: Sustainability of the Programme



Gender Perspective

As of now, the Chennai training centre has been catering to train women electricians where SEIF has been able to train seventy five women electricians every year.

Trainer-Trainee Ratio

1:25 - One trainer for twenty five candidates in every training batch

Training expenses

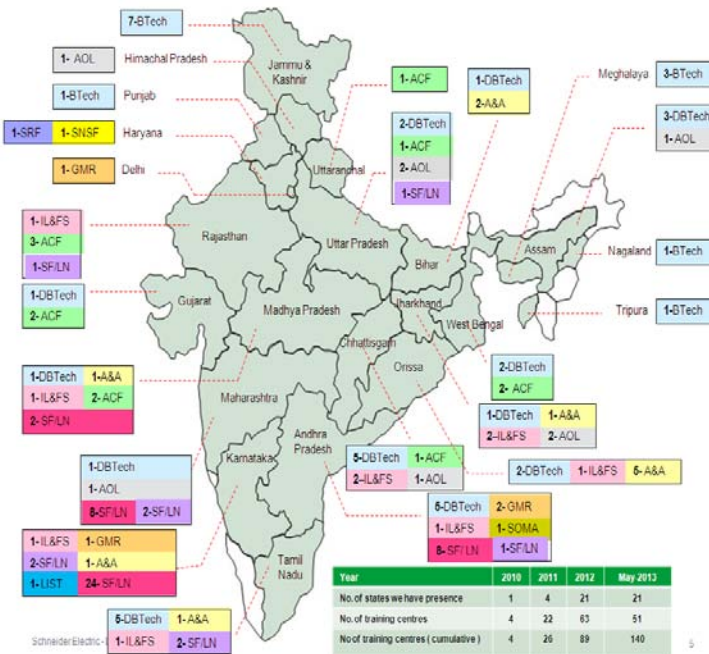
Initial investment to set up the physical infrastructure (work shed and classroom): In all cases all our partners have either a permanent structure or rent out the facility which is a part of operational cost.

One time fixed cost: Rs. 5.25 lakhs for lab equipment.

Operational cost: Ranging from Rs. 14 lakhs to Rs. 20 lakhs based on whether it is non-residential or residential training (for a 4 month training program)

Journey So Far

Figure 2: SEIF Electrician's Training Centers Across India



As of May 2013, one hundred and forty electricians training centres have been established in twenty one states across India. It is projected that in

2013, over ten thousand youth would be trained in electrician's course. Further, there is an exclusive women electrician training centre in Chennai where the trained women electricians are placed at Schneider's Chennai Manufacturing facility.

Trained women electrician



Employed at Schneider Electric India
Chennai Plant

Delivering Socio-Economic Impact

The training center has been able to cater to skills training of over one hundred youth since 2012 and trainees have been able to improve their livelihood earning opportunities. This model is an excellent set-up wherein the knowledge partner, the implementation partner and community have been able to create a positive socio-economic impact in the lives of many families in Gurgaon.

From a background of limited financial ability, trained electricians have been able to earn a living by application of the skills acquired from the training programme.

While this is the story of one training centre, this successful model has been replicated at various locations across the country. SEIF has been able to create livelihood opportunities for youth from similar backgrounds with the help of other partners like SNS Foundation. SEIF's expertise as knowledge partner has been a critical element in forging many partnerships with other NPOs and youth not only from urban areas but also from rural hinterlands.

The challenge is to reach out to millions of youth still untouched by this transformation and to connect the training set-ups with organizations looking for trained manpower. Industry linkages are one of the key enablers that determine the future scope of this initiative.

Training Class in progress



At Electrical Lab



Trainees at Electrical Lab



On the Job exposure



ANNEXURE 1

Case 1: Mr. Devendra from Jhajjar - Story of an Entrepreneur

Mr. Devender Prajapati, thirty years old is a permanent resident of district Jhajjar Haryana. His family shifted to Rajendra Park, Gurgaon thirty years ago. His father Mr. Chotu Ram Singh was a retired supervisor in Delhi Development Authority and mother a house wife.

Devender dropped from his regular studies after receiving supplementary in standard twelfth class. Devender got married in 2003. He had two sons of age nine and six years. After marriage Devender started working in a private company at a monthly salary of Rs. 2500. It was very difficult to sustain his family on such a low salary in Gurgaon. His wife had undergone a certificate course in Cutting & Tailoring, so, she started contributing in family earnings by tailoring work.

Between 2005 & 2012, Devender switched various jobs to support his family remuneration was low and working conditions poor in all these jobs.

On seeing Schneider Electric India Foundation - SNSF electrical training advertisement on cable TV, Devender approached the training centre to get more information. He was encouraged by seeing the lab infrastructure and experience of the faculty. This motivated him to join the course.

Devender completed his three months training which included electrical theory, practical, English Communication, Life skill and Financial Literacy. He also completed one month On Job Training at renowned construction site in Badshahpur, Gurgaon. After completion of training Devender started getting job offers with attractive salary but due to his previous experiences he didn't opt for job. Rather he decided to become an entrepreneur. This decision aided with the skills he got through the training centre enabled him to handle three-four contracts on electrical installations every month. He is now able to earn almost thrice of what he was getting in full time jobs.

Home Managers – a Step towards Women Empowerment

Pritha Dutt and Ankita Dhyani

Introduction

Domestic work is one of the oldest occupations in the world. But what could be more ironic than the fact, that these domestic workers, who are engaged in a work that entitles their employers a life of comfort, remain invisible and marginalized.

According to the 2001 census, about 50% of the 80 million inter-state migrants are domestic workers. Nearly 90% of domestic workers in India are twelve to seventy five years old women.¹ Over the last few years, studies on domestic workers in India have noted the increase in the numbers of migrant female domestic workers in the cities. However, this sizeable number of urban female domestic workers still remains largely unrecognized in public records (including economic reports) and under-reported in the labour market.

Table 1: Growth of Domestic Workers by Category

| Category (Domestic workers) | 1999-2000 | | | 2004-2005 | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Number of Workers | Percentage of total female employment | Female share (%) | Numbers of Workers | Percentage of total female employment | Female share (%) |
| House- maid/ servant | 438,200 | 0.4 | 80.4 | 2,381,200 | 1.6 | 87.4 |
| Cook | 6,400 | 0.0 | 72.6 | 96,600 | 0.1 | 73.9 |
| Govern- ess/ba- bysitter | 2,600 | 0.0 | 76.4 | 69,600 | 0.0 | 74.2 |
| Total | 447,100 | 0.4 | 63.4 | 2,547,400 | 1.8 | 71.6 |

Source: Rajni Palriwala and Neeta.N., "Paid Care Workers in India : Domestic Workers and Anganwadi Workers" (Geneva : UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD),2009), UNRISD

The working hours of these domestic workers (household help) can be anywhere between eight and eighteen hours a day with no recompense for additional hours or extra work. While exploitation of full time workers is quite common, even part-time help work for all seven days a week.

¹ National Domestic Workers' Movement

Wages for household help could vary from a low of Rs. 150 to a high of Rs. 2000 a month. Paid leave on medical grounds and medical benefits are often unheard of. Though domestic workers have been included in the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 (Act 33 of 2008), they are yet to get any benefits.

With poor compensation, non-existent employment welfare and benefits, uncongenial work environment and a high rate of abuse household help is, obviously, not a career of choice. Need to provide for the family or supplement irregular family income while lacking in any other skill-sets is the only reason for domestic workers to continue despite their plight. Since household work is considered low, dirty, and menial it is a challenge to integrate domestic workers into the mainstream Indian society.

The situation is worse for those who migrate from rural or *mofussil* areas to work as unskilled labour in urban agglomerations. Their spouses, sisters or daughters often take up such a route to pad-up family resources. The worst-hit are perhaps those young girls and boys who come through human trafficking cartels and agents that provide household workers.

Taking a leaf out of 'Urmila', a livelihoods programme pioneered by Gujarat-based NGO Saath, Empower Pragati Vocational & Staffing Pvt. Ltd (EPVS)² thought of launching a livelihoods initiative for domestic workers in 2010.

NSDC facilitated bringing on board Rajendra Joshi, an award winner for a similar programme at Saath. With his help and vision, Empower Pragati launched the Home Manager programme in 2010 in Delhi-NCR, Bangalore and Kolkata. While in Bangalore Resident Welfare Associations were approached for collaboration, in Kolkata several churches and missionaries expressed interest in the program. In December 2012, Empower Pragati signed an MoU with the Delhi Government for a pilot programme for Home Managers.

A Home Manager is a value-added household help, who will know how to run modern household gadgets and manage households that follow an increasingly global outlook. In this unique 'Home Manager' initiative of Empower Pragati efforts are made to generate awareness and then mobilize vulnerable women in the informal labour market to get skilled and trained as Home Managers. Upon successful certification trainees are appointed on the rolls of Empower Pragati with all statutory benefits and privileges.

² Empower Pragati, a partner company of the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC), is an India-based private sector social enterprise specializing in livelihood skill development to empower India's disadvantaged youth. Empower Pragati offers training to young men and women from economically weaker sections, enabling them to access sustainable livelihoods and growth opportunities. EPVS is actively working on various livelihood programmes for the youth that engender filling in the labour void.

So far, EPVS has trained nearly two thousand women, which include both part-time as well as full-time workers. Of these, two fifty have been successfully placed with employers. The programme has undergone many revisions in its concept and design, since inception. Presently, Empower Pragati has operations in Delhi-NCR and Ahmedabad. This case study covers the group that was mobilized in March 2013 at Paharganj in Delhi.

Background

The major issue with any livelihood related programme for urban poor is not just the availability of services but access to services. These workers are restricted to a certain area and cannot go far off for training or work. Commuting being a serious concern, both in terms of cost and time, the programme had to be delivered keeping this constraint in mind.

Socio-economic Outlook of Paharganj

Paharganj is a neighbourhood of Central Delhi located west of New Delhi railway station. A well known market place, it is one of the three administrative subdivisions of the Central Delhi district. Popular for its hotels, Paharganj is especially popular among backpackers and low-cost travellers. It is perhaps the biggest hub of budget hotels for foreign tourists in Delhi.

However, with rising congestion, proliferation of bars, and increasing illegal activities like, drug peddling, the area has also become a hotspot for crime as well as a hideout for criminals. A sizeable population here constitutes of migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, and West Bengal.

Table 2: Socio-economic Indicators for Paharganj

| Socio-economic indicator | Paharganj |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Sex ratio | 800/1000 |
| Dependency ratio | 48.60% |
| Work participation rate | 44.50% |
| Female work participation rate | 11% |
| Male work participation rate | 72% |

Poor Urban Women

For migrant population, relocation and displacement often leads to challenges of sustained access to livelihoods, wherein women have to bear the brunt. Poor urban women, for whom survival itself is a struggle, need basic necessities such as nutritious food, clean drinking water, access to education, healthcare and opportunities for skill acquisition, and access to income generating activities.

Therefore, success of programmes targeted at urban poor women require cooperation and coordination between the government and other social actors like trade unions or an apex body that recognizes the rights of domestic workers.

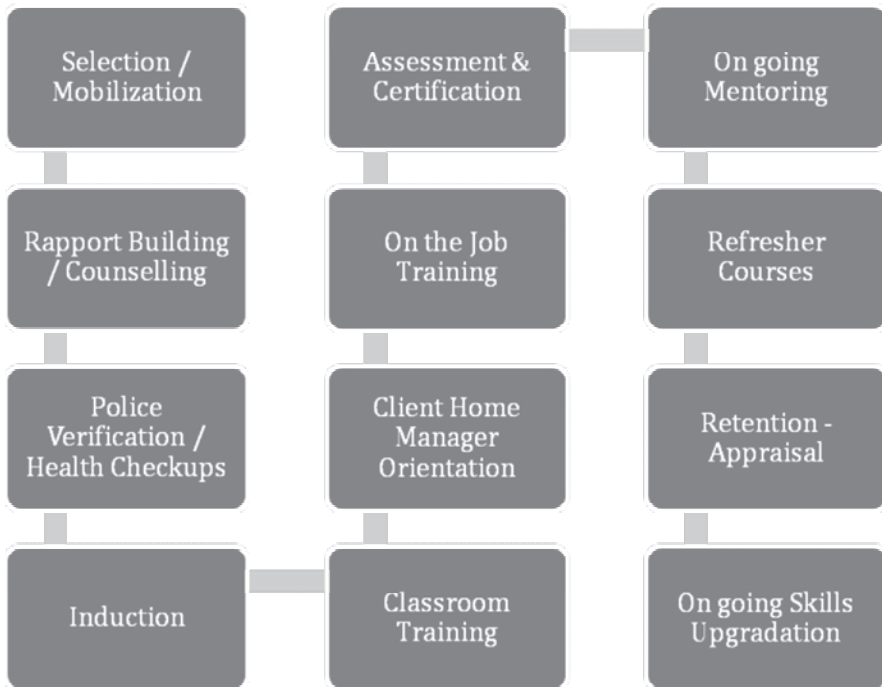
NGOs with skilled manpower and resources can bring to the table capabilities like research, access to target population, time-tested means of mobilization for a specific population, and linkages to other welfare measures.

Paharganj area has shelters and homes, run by various NGOs, mainly working for women and children. Maitri India is a New Delhi-based developmental humanitarian NGO that is committed to facilitating citizenship rights, basic services, dignity, and respect for the most vulnerable populations in India.

In this context, EPVS decided to partner with Maitri to reach out to the target population and deliver its programme in Paharganj area.

Overview of the Home Manager Concept

The Home Manager Model



Benefits to Domestic Worker and Employer

| Benefits to Trainee | Benefits to the Client |
|--|--|
| Individual identity and a dignified job | Reliable resource with self-respect |
| Formal employment with structured salary | Resource without daily crisis and worries |
| Health check-up and verification by police | Safe and healthy resource |
| Builds self-esteem and individual capacity | Further improvement in capabilities possible |
| Continuous improvement process | Forum for client feedback and response |
| Choice to work at client residence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-time (24 x 7) • Part-time (12 hours a day) | Flexibility to client depending upon requirement and resources available |
| Training from experts on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housekeeping • Cooking • First Aid • Child Care • Patient Care • Communication skills • Use of Gadgets & Appliances, etc. | Well trained resource in identified skills; Professional service standards; Consistent service-quality |

Impact measurement

The impact of the programme on lives of women is measured in terms of following attributes:

| Economic betterment | Personal enrichment |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Poverty alleviation | • Self confidence |
| • Entrepreneurship | • Better quality of life |
| • Control over income | • Decision making power |
| • Increased work participation | • Application of logic |

The Home Manager Programme at Paharganj

Mobilization

For a company with no presence on the ground and lacking in community connect it was a challenge for EPVS to mobilize and create trust amongst vulnerable women to join the programme. Empower Pragati realized that it would make sense to partner with NGOs who were already working with women in Paharganj area.

While scouting for a partner NGO, EPVS came in contact with Maitri India, a New Delhi-based developmental humanitarian NGO that is committed

to facilitating citizenship rights, basic services, and respect for the most vulnerable populations in India.

When EPVS shared its programme objective with Maitri India, the two found synergy and a worthwhile purpose to pursue together. The programme was designed to be more accommodating to allow vulnerable women to overcome their constraints. Open for all women between ages eighteen and forty five years, EPVS set aside a set of eligibility criteria for recruitment in the Home Manager training programme at Paharganj.

- Domestic maids, underemployed or unemployed
- Neo literate or semi literate (Class V pass candidates preferred)
- Financially disempowered
- Physically fit

Maitri helped EPVS reach out to vulnerable women from their Homeless Resource Centre (HRC) and other similar projects. EPVS conducted counselling sessions for the target audience and finally shortlisted 20 women for the programme.

Table 3: List of enrolments in the Group at Paharganj

| S. No. | Name | Education | Availability | Hours available | Expertise |
|--------|------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Neelam | 8th Pass | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs | Housekeeping |
| 2. | Pinki | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 8 hrs and 12 Hrs | Housekeeping |
| 3. | Radha Devi | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs and 8 Hrs | Housekeeping |
| 4. | Savitri | 9th Pass | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs | Housekeeping |
| 5. | Jyoti | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs | Housekeeping |
| 6. | Abhilash | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 Hrs | Housekeeping |
| 7. | Reeta Devi | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 Hrs | Housekeeping |
| 8. | Sudesh | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 8 hrs | Housekeeping |
| 9. | Asha | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs and 8 Hrs | Housekeeping |
| 10. | Savita | Literate | 1st May Onwards | 4 hrs and 8 Hrs | Housekeeping |

Training programme

The total training duration of one hundred hours was distributed at no more than two hours everyday. On the basis of our researched model the training programme included:

- Life Skills and Personality Development,
- Home Maintenance,
- Financial Literacy,
- Basic Cooking,
- Housekeeping,
- Basic English,
- Patient Care, and
- Child Care (optional).

Picture 1: Geriatric and Patient Care



Picture 2: Session on Child Care



Placement

On successful completion of the Home Manager training programme, potential clients were identified and selected through

- Listing to reputed agencies for expectations and requirements,
- Directly approaching potential clients, i.e., offices and homes in the area,
- Placement in local classified advertisements and Business Directories, and
- Word of mouth campaigns through Maitri India staff.

An enquiry form was designed (see Annexure) in order to gather initial information from potential clients. As part of the programme design, coordinators visit homes of potential clients and interview them, following the gathering of information.

If the coordinators consider the client to be trustworthy, a contract outlining the rights and obligations is signed between the client and EPVS.

Profiles of trained Home Managers are matched with the requirements and preferences of the client, to find the best fit. The most suitable Home Manager is then placed with the client in accordance with the contractual terms.

Follow up and Grievance Redressal

At EPVS placement of the trainees is but only a significant step in the process that continues even afterwards. As per the company policy, a constant communication is meant to be established with the Home Manager for follow up action. Enquiries received from prospective clients are also filed.

A database file for each Home Manager containing details of training undergone, individual expertise, placement history, and attendance and salary records is maintained. This helps in tracking of each working relationship between the Home Manager and client.

Under the redressal mechanism of the Home Manager programme, grievances and complaints can be directly communicated by the client to the coordinators. Similarly, a Home Manager can also share their grievances with the coordinator. A digital file is maintained by EPVS that records complaints received from clients along with an action taken report.

Success Stories

Though stories of success are few, Empower Pragati has had its share of learning from the challenges it has faced so far. A couple of first-hand

experiences of Home Managers, trained by Empower Pragati, outline the successes and challenges. The personal accounts reflect the transformation their life has witnessed since joining the programme.

Sajdaa Khatoon

Sajdaa Khatoon belongs to Darbanga, Uttar Pradesh near Kanpur. She is twenty two years old. This young married woman was busy with household chores, serving her husband and his family members. The husband was unsupportive, disrespectful, and did not allow her to visit her parents. One day, he took her to Kanpur and left her behind in the city. She was clueless, scared, and depressed. One of her relatives referred her to a community counsellor in Kanpur. He convinced her to join the Home Manager programme at Empower Pragati.

Sajdaa joined the Home Manager programme at EVPS training centre in Gurgaon. The one hundred fifty hours training schedule included theoretical and practical lessons in housekeeping, laundry, basic cooking, and introductory child and geriatric care. She received a health clearance certificate stating that she had no communicable disease and a police verification of her bona-fide address and past criminal record, which was found to be negative.

After completing her training, Sajdaa opted to work for full-time for Mrs. Arora at her New Delhi residence. She was appointed for a probationary period with Empower Pragati at a minimum wage of Rs. 6500 per month. Empower Pragati adds Rs. 479 as PF and Rs. 166 as ESIS contribution.

As a Home Manager with a monthly income, Sajdaa feels happy and more secure. She now has greater self-reliance and an improved self-esteem. The client too is happy with her work and has given good feedback about her. Mrs Arora has also helped Sajdaa reconnect with her parents.

Baby Kumari

Baby Kumari is a nineteen years year old girl from Kanpur, U.P. Her family comprises of six siblings and her parents. Her father was the only earning member in her family. It was very difficult for her family to make their ends meet. Due to their poor socio-economical condition Baby and her siblings had an uncertain future.

One day she got in touch with the community counsellor in Kanpur who introduced her to Empower Pragati. She came to our training centre in Gurgaon, and enrolled into our Home Manager programme.

Initially, she was nervous and worried about her future. She did not open up easily. But the classes on motivation and life skills during the

training really helped her come out of her shell. She was trained in housekeeping, laundry, basic cooking, and introductory child and geriatric care. She received a health clearance certificate stating that she had no communicable disease and a police verification of her bona-fide address and past criminal record, which was found to be negative.

After her training Baby joined full-time work with Mrs. Preeti Agarwal in New Delhi. She was appointed for a probationary period with Empower Pragati at a monthly salary of Rs. 6500. Empower Pragati adds Rs. 479 as PF contribution and Rs. 166 as ESIS contribution.

It is over a year now, that she has been working for Mrs. Preeti Agarwal. Through her training and employment, she has evolved into a confident and self-assured professional. Thus, her life has changed significantly over a period of time and she has also been able to save a sufficient part of her income.

These success stories encourage Empower Pragati to surge ahead in the direction of developing a sustainable livelihood model for the so far neglected domestic workers.

Impact of the Programme on Target Group

The Home Manager programme was envisaged at EPVS to alleviate the misery of poor vulnerable urban and rural women through skill and competency building. The programme also sought to improve their access to various services. The Home Manager programme empowered those recruited for the training by

- a) Appropriate skilling and competency building;
- b) Building self-esteem and dignity, through offering full-time employment on company rolls, as against the present day practise of 'unorganized' employment;
- c) Introducing domestic workers to organized banking system, remitting their salaries into their bank accounts, and encouraging them to increase their savings;
- d) Training the women on life skills and personal hygiene in addition to other competencies (As a rub-off these practices are likely to improve living conditions and quality of life at their own homes as well);
- e) Planning for their children's education and their own financial security with the help of more predictable incomes;
- f) Accessing quality and reliable health care through ESIS, which EPVS subscribes for the Home Managers; and
- g) Fostering a culture of savings by subscribing to provident fund scheme (A security net in case of any eventualities and encourages

women to save for the 'rainy day').

However, the most desirable of outcomes of any skilling and empowerment programme, vis-à-vis, gainful employment at the end of the training schedule, has not yet blessed the newly trained Home Managers from Paharganj despite best efforts of EPVS.

Challenges and Lessons Learnt

It is well appreciated that for a majority, domestic work is not a career choice or ambition. At best it is just a means of survival. The programme did not attempt to lure women into being domestic servants, to cater to the growing demand. Instead, Home Manager programme at EPVS is an effort to provide minimum employable skills to underprivileged migrant women keeping in mind their educational level (or lack of it) and the socio-economic background.

Challenges in Mobilization

This was a major challenge in the initial stages of the project. Reaching out to the women in urban slums and convincing them about the training was an uphill task. Initially, a lot of problems were faced in this area due to lack of on-ground experience with mobilizing that target group.

- Understandably, women had doubts, questions, and apprehensions.
- The earning expectation was and continues to be high.
- Importance of training and skilling is not seen as a requirement in the target group.
- Most of the target group did not have time in the day to attend the training sessions while scheduling classes at odd hours was also not practical for them.

Mobilizing the first group with the help of Maitri India made things easier. However, it did take a lot of time and needed constant follow up. While Maitri was active in Paharganj, it is not always easy to locate an organization that enjoys a good rapport with the community.

Placement

Even after training, the placement has not been easy. Numerous issues like finding appropriate clients, availability of the right Home Manager (matching of work hours), location of workplace, salary structure, etc. had to be dealt with as they emerged as a challenge.

Despite these challenges, there have been a few placements (only two out of twelve) in another group that was trained in parallel elsewhere in Delhi. For better placement results, Home Manager as a concept needs to catch up in urban agglomeration like Delhi.

Transformation

Simplistically put, the Home Manager programme aims at organizing the unorganized sector. However, this transition is not only in terms of economics, but also encompasses behavioural, social, and cultural evolutions. The shift has its positive effects on the quality of life of individual and her family too. While such a transition may seem feasible, a great deal of time, energy, and resources are required to actualize it.

Future plan

The Home Manager programme at Paharganj was a learning experience that taught EPVS through the challenges faced. Though the training did not culminate in a lot of placements, a majority of these women found a new perspective, higher self-esteem and improved self-confidence. These women now actively participate in decision-making on family matters.

“Vishwas hi nahi ho raha tha ki aisa kuch hoga. Lekin jab sach mein padhai kari toh acha laga. Naukri nai toh kuch seekha toh sahi” - Savita, Home Manager.

Encouraged by the response of these newly trained women, Empower Pragati has started a new programme at Tigri, in Sangam Vihar area of South Delhi despite the poor placement outcomes. This group of twenty women was recruited in collaboration with an NGO called Chetanalaya (see Annexure). EPVS approached Chetanalaya and shared its vision, which has a large overlap with theirs. Chetanalaya is the social action wing of Archdiocese of Delhi which is the concrete expression of the social concerns of the catholic church in the given geo-political and socio-economic context.

ANNEXURE 1

About Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY)

The *Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana* (SJSRY), targeting the urban poor population, was launched in 1997, subsuming three previous schemes for urban poverty alleviation, namely,

- Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY),
- Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), and
- Prime Minister's Integrated Urban Poverty Eradication Programme (PMIUPEP).

The *Yojana* (SJSRY) in Delhi targets the urban population living below the poverty line, as defined (and updated periodically) by the government for the NCT of Delhi.

One of the key objectives of SJSRY is to support skill development and training programmes enabling urban poor to access employment opportunities opened up by the market or undertake self-employment under the Skill Training for Employment Promotion amongst Urban Poor (STEP-UP).

As a major component of SJSRY, STEP-UP aims at the following objectives.

- Poverty alleviation in urban areas by facilitating skill development.
- Well structured market-oriented programs to enable the poor and unskilled, employable as wage workers or successful micro-entrepreneurs.
- Promoting economic growth and contribution of the urban economy to national GDP.
- Ensuring a supply of appropriately skilled manpower at the lower end, thus enabling inclusive growth.

While the initial response was good with a large number of enrolments, the project suffered progressively higher drop-out rates. Unrealistic targets led to later disappointments, wherein alleged caste related discrimination and large expenditure turned into major issues.

About Maitri

Maitri India is a New Delhi-based developmental humanitarian NGO that is committed to facilitating citizenship rights, basic services, dignity, and respect for the most vulnerable populations in India. Maitri attains its goal

of advancing social equity and promoting public health in India through education, community outreach, networking, and legal advocacy.

The organization was founded in 2005 by Gen. (Retd) Bhopinder Singh and Winnie Singh with the initial goal of generating a much needed awareness among personnel of the uniformed services and their families about health risks such as sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Following its success in this initial objective, the organization expanded its reach through a variety of projects since 2007.

Some of Maitri's current initiatives include addressing the issue of violence against women (especially in the uniformed services), running victim support and victim to survivor programmes, and promoting dignity and support for abandoned elderly widows in Vrindavan (Mathura, India).

Some of Maitri's other initiatives include improving the health and welfare of vulnerable migrant populations like rickshaw pullers and the homeless and providing educational and skill-enhancement opportunities for underprivileged children and women respectively.

Maitri also runs an Integrated Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) for HIV/AIDS, manages a Homeless Resource Centre (HRC) in Central Delhi and New Delhi districts, and facilitates workshops on adolescent issues in schools.

About Chetanalaya

After independence and partition of India, various types of migrations took place. The poor, illiterate, under-employed, and unemployed from other villages and towns were flocking to Delhi for a better life. Illiterate, uneducated, and untrained, they were unable to find worthwhile employment opportunities. They were used to farm related activities and seldom could they find any such opening in Delhi. As a result a number slums and unauthorized colonies began to mushroom. NGOs of various types began to be formed for social work.

In this context, the Diocesan Social Action was mandated to coordinate rehabilitation works. All these developments were challenging Social Action to respond. Run by Diocesan Social Action, Chetanalaya engages in programs for promotion of education, protection of child rights, gender mainstreaming, community healthcare and sustainable livelihood.

With the help of trained resources from Chetanalaya, EPVS was able to mobilize and enrol a twenty unemployed and underprivileged migrant women in Tigri in Sangam Vihar area of New Delhi. Currently, Chetanalaya is assisting in mobilizing women for another group in the area, as there has been considerable interest among the community women in this programme.

ANNEXURE 2

Client Primary Enquiry Form

(Presently, EPVS is using a modified version of this enquiry form)

Details of the Residence : (approx area in sq.ft./sq.mtrs)

| Home Type | 1 BHK | 2 BHK | 3 BHK | 4 BHK | More |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Flat | | | | | |
| Tenement | | | | | |
| Bungalow | | | | | |

How did you come to know about Empower Home Manager Services ?

| From a friend | Newspaper Advt | Newspaper write-up | Internet/Website | TV | Any other (pl.specify) |
|---------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|----|------------------------|
| | | | | | |

Services needed from a Home Manager (pl.tick appropriately – all are separately charged) :

| Housekeeping | Cooking | Patient Care | Child Care | Geriatric Care | Any other (pl.specify) |
|--------------|---------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------------------|
| | | | | | |

HM services needed for No. of Working Hours per day : _____
(4 hours, 8 hours, 12 hours)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(You may also send your enquiries by email, placement@empowerpragati.in,
info@empowerpragati.in)

Help Line: 011 49556000/622

Empower Pragati Vocational & Staffing Pvt Ltd
B-87A, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019

Enabling and Empowering the Urban Unskilled

Gayathri Vasudevan, Kirti Vardhana and Jyothi S. Rao

Introduction

The construction industry has been booming in the Bangalore metropolis for nearly a decade now. To cater to this demand, construction workers come into Bangalore from all over the country to seek employment. No matter what their skill level, the sheer demand for numbers ensures that everybody gets a job at different construction sites. However it has been observed in many cases that safety is a low priority on many of these constructions sites. Loss of life and limb are often taken lightly. Workers are unaware of how and when to use safety/ protective equipment and often do not take the right precautions necessary for a safe work environment. A large section of the construction worker community in Bangalore comes from the impoverished districts of Raichur, Koppal and Yadgir of Karnataka. But there are also a number of immigrant workers who come from all over the country including the states of Bihar, Orissa etc.

The demographic of the construction workers is largely the urban poor and a migratory population that is straddling an unviable agricultural background and an unpleasant but marginally more monetarily rewarding urban life. Stakeholders in this are mostly the workers whose very livelihood and future is at stake and their employers (builders/ contractors) who are required to insure the workers and indemnify them in case of loss due to accidents. However, most workers are unaware of the law and the provisions that could benefit them.

The Problem

The real estate sector in India is a key employment driver. However, it is a highly unorganized sector which employs a large number of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. Existing facilities are largely institutionalized and do not cater to a mass of population which is underprivileged and cannot forgo its daily wages in order to get formally trained. Distress migration necessitates stronger livelihood adaptive strategy than induced migration.

Challenges Faced by Bangalore Metro

Following an inspection conducted by the Labour Department at the various Metro construction sites, it was found that more than 5,000 migrant labourers were employed in construction activities without any social security cover or safety measures. These labourers work in

bad conditions and were sometimes deprived of basic and essential civic amenities like onsite drinking water facilities or toilets. The workers were living in unacceptable conditions and were not paid for overtime work. To improve the conditions of the workers employed under the Bangalore Metro project and responding to a Public Interest Litigation, the Division Bench directed the BMRCCL to convene a meeting of contractors, labour department and petitioners to improve the condition of the workers.

There are several Metro projects in major cities in India, with similar conditions for the workers. The ruling is important as the Court said that development cannot be at the cost of workers and gave a warning that the construction project would be stopped if human rights of workers were not protected. The project was given 20 days to ensure compliance, increase awareness on need for safety and its practice.

Picture 1: Internet Discussion Forum Based on an Accident at the Bangalore Metro Construction Site

Continued 1 2 Next»

| Author | Messages | To Expand | To Collapse |
|--|---|-----------|-------------|
| Service Apartment in Bangalore-Apex suites | Its really so sad. (Posted: Wednesday, January 06, 2010 at 16:12) | | |
| veena | The contract of the metro, they want to make money only. They are bothered about safety of the people of the nation and safety of the metro (Posted: Friday , December 11, 2009 at 16:40) | | |
| niranjn | This shows how we care for poor people's life and well being.it is a shame for all us to see the them risk their life and limb so we all can have a nice life. (Posted: Friday , December 11, 2009 at 14:08) | | |
| jossy philips | prematve safety to be taken at any time of work, safety is better then running out for helping the injured and safe guarding them. (Posted: Wednesday, December 09, 2009 at 11:45) | | |
| Biranchi Narayan Acharya | The staging failure is unfortunate but in cnstruction sector it is a common phenomina. When a thing is being constructed or being produced, there are a lot of compelling reason beyond control that leads to accident as these are hazardous activities. Despite all possible care a mother may expire while giving birth to a baby. Thus such events needs moral supports not criticism. (Posted: Saturday , December 05, 2009 at 15:09) | | |
| busna | As expected. India doesnot have Safety attitude towards construction activities. People responsible shall be prosecuted under the law (Posted: Saturday , December 05, 2009 at 13:36) | | |
| silvestre machado | i can not understand is there no health and safety department or risk acessment department that is responsible for the safety of it,s workers.It's just a shame to have an accident like this it does not matter 1 person or 100 it is just that human life counts. (Posted: Friday , December 04, 2009 at 19:02) | | |
| Raja | we don't need any foreigners to halt our 'development'. we are helping ourselves anyway. (Posted: Friday , December 04, 2009 at 08:41) | | |
| saraswathi seshan | Before taking any construction work its the duty of the govt. as well as the assigned com.to take safety measures for their workers as well as public.for that matter anything involved in the construction of the project.AND ABOVE ALL THE COMMITMENT ,SINCERIATY,HONESTY AND INTIGERITY IS PRIME AND THE REST WILL FOLLOW AUTOMATICALLY (Posted: Friday , December 04, 2009 at 07:52) | | |

LabourNet bagged the assignment for the essential ‘Safety Measures’ implementation training that aimed at bringing about behavioural changes in the workers and their supervisors leading to better enforcement of safety measures at the worksite; the understanding that safe work practices would lead to better productivity and income increase (due to no-person work days lost due to accidents/ injuries) was the key outcome mapped by LabourNet and the client. The project aimed to impact over 5,000 workers aligned to 15 contractors participating in the Bangalore Metro project.

The process began with a Safety Climate Survey of the Bangalore Metro projects sites by LabourNet, to diagnose the prevalent attitudes towards safety and the extent of safety behaviour followed. This was then followed by a 6 weeks training program which was a combination of classroom based study as well as on-site learning. The training program was further followed up with a Post training Safety Climate Survey. The focus of Safety Climate Survey was primarily on the attitude of the Supervisors & Managers across nine behavioural parameters. Post training, the trainees were observed with regard to adherence to safety rules at site. The best performer was awarded as the Safety Champion. Till date, this distinctive program has trained 980 workers /Supervisors across various Bangalore Metro sites and it was extended to 160 workers of the Hyderabad Metro site also. 100 people have been trained in crane operations at the Bangalore and Hyderabad Metro sites.

The Solution

On-site training module is the right initiative to help construction workers at the entry level learn while they earn and help them move up their career graph with a prospect to get better wages. The training also helps the fraternity of employers (BMRCL contractors) to offer higher construction quality, timely project completion, lesser material wastage, and happier customers. LabourNet focussed on the behaviour based safety to ensure that every worker performs his role with minimal risk by adhering to safety guidelines.

The scope of the engagement was to help BMRCL measure and improve the safety attitude across all its active sites. LabourNet was involved in 4 key areas across the work-sites:



Safety Climate Survey and Assessment

An analysis of the current state of safety culture at a site revealed that 96% of the injuries were from unsafe acts and only 4% were from unsafe conditions. Behaviours and the actions of people were observed; risky behaviours and situations lead to injuries and incidents were required to be corrected at the core level. Ratings on these parameters were provided across all levels and included Managers, Supervisors and Workers. The participant's level of maturity and improvements requirements were identified with respect to their attitude, mind-set and behaviour. This was then aggregated at a work-site level to arrive at the current safety perception scores that would be the baseline for future improvements.

Behavioural Safety Training

- BBS training program was planned and executed at all levels, from Managers, to Supervisors at site to the workers working on the site
- The objective was to achieve a change in the general attitude through providing on-going support
- Extended support was provided to the Contractor at site, where the training had already been completed with on-call training support and customized training content.
- Post the training programme, a gap of 6 weeks was given to participants to apply their training. After another 6 weeks, a post climate safety survey was also conducted to ascertain the impact of the program

Post training Survey and Assessment

- The Post training Safety Climate Survey was conducted via questionnaires, behaviour change observations at the sites
- The participants were rated across key behavioural safety attributes like Management Commitment, work environment, communication, involvement in safety drills and support systems within the site.
- Pre and Post Training Impact Assessment presentations were prepared for each work-site where the trainings were conducted.

Nature of Engagement, Intervention, Support and Strategies for Reaching out to the Poor

A detailed inspection report by Labour officials stated that for hundreds of contract workers employed by establishments as part of the construction of the multi-crore Namma Metro project found that for most workers, every workday was a challenge. Barring payment of their minimum wages, a majority of employers offered very little in the way of basic workplace facilities – be it drinking water, toilets, accommodation, canteens, first aid or medical help.

Most significantly, very few establishments held a licence under the Inter-State Migrant Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act (ISMW), a mandatory requirement for those employing migrant workers. The report submitted that barring six worksites, migrant labour was employed by all contractors. However, not one of them had a license or fulfilled any of the mandated requirements, such as providing accommodation, canteens, crèches and paying displacement/journey allowances routinely. The inspection found that the total number of contract hires on this project was around 3,745 men and 18 women (at that time). Since most migrant workers relocate in search of work and are hired independently, the job contractors were not taking adequate responsibility for their security.

In such a scenario, it became all the more important to educate and empower these workers about the hazards of unsafe work practises and how working in accident prone areas without proper protection could have adverse consequences.

The L&D team at LabourNet, after many deliberations, decided to use the Behaviour Science Approach to conduct Behavioural Based Safety training program as they found that individual behaviour was the major cause of most work-related injuries and illnesses. The training aimed to provide insight to reduce work loss-time injuries, through the analysis of current work environment.

Given the differences between the age as well as background and experiences of each of the participants, “one size fits all” safety training would not have worked for everyone. The training sessions had to have the right blend of content and also the right appeal to address to a diverse set of participants. Blending each group’s preferred style helped trainers to connect better with their participants, and apparently allowed the groups to learn from each other.

Critical Challenges Faced

The team faced, and successfully overcame barriers while implementing the workplace safety training programs by using a multi-dimensional approach shared below:

Top Management Support

A more visible commitment to institutionalizing workplace-safety practices, from the board and senior management, to improve the current status quo was strongly required. Introducing healthy practices to engage employees and volunteers by initiating reward structures and imposing difficult consequences would be a step taken in the right direction. Top management’s modelling the desired behaviour was deemed most essential for a workplace-safety program to become institutionalized. The team ensured that the project management team at the work-sites were a part of the training programme.

Lack of Safety Understanding/Appreciation

There were people at different levels of the organization who had to be drawn to understand why safety is a crucial issue and how their active and effective participation in a workplace safety program would benefit them in the long run. To an extent there was clear lack of appreciation and ability to identify the amount of time and money that accidents/injuries are costing the organization, and how this money could be used resourcefully.

Communication

Lack of clarity about the issues surrounding safety and the consequences of accidents and injuries to the employee/worker's overall well-being were some of the common barriers to workplace safety training. There was a constant need to clearly and consistently communicate performance expectations about safety from employees at all times. Employee's goals and objectives in terms of reducing the cost and frequency of accidents and injuries had to be emphasized at regular intervals. The potential cost of accidents and injuries also needed to be addressed.

Organizational Structure

The employee's organizational structure and location of offices was also a barrier to conducting an effective workplace safety program. Since most offices and workplaces were located in multiple sites, it was difficult to ensure a standard approach to workplace safety. A highly decentralized structure within the worksite also presented its own set of challenges in carrying out safety goals.

Diverse Group of Participants

Another significant barrier that safety trainers faced during the training was the work force spanning across diverse demographics, organizational hierarchy and work experience. Teams were comprised of workers of all ages; 20-year-olds were working alongside veteran workers, some well into their 60s.

Resolving the Hurdles

Identifying these barriers proved helpful in improving and implementing a better and more effective workplace safety program. Some of the recommendations suggested after the training were:

1. The concept of "Benchmarking", where a standard or point of reference is set, using which the Management can measure or compare how each department works to perform and check safety parameters was institutionalised.

2. Publicizing how much accidents and injuries were costing the company, underscored the serious nature of safety. For example, doing exercises on alternative uses of money saved (by not paying for injury/ other claims) made the consequences of the actions tangible.
3. Comparing departmental cost of accidents/injuries such as reflected in insurance premiums, were used encourage company involvement and backing
4. Project level leaders (across functions like Planning, Finance, Procurement) were associated and aligned with the program, they appreciated the impact of their individual and team actions on safety and began to change practices within their departments.
5. By linking performance reviews and team incentives with safety goals and objectives, employees and managers directed focused efforts to workers and led with the commitment to change.

People from various backgrounds retain information in different ways, making effective communication a challenge. Trainers need to find new and creative ways to connect with different demographics regarding safety.

One of the most significant barriers that safety trainers faced during the training was the work force spanning across four generations. Teams were comprised of workers of all ages; 20-year-olds were working alongside veteran workers, some well into their 60s.

Each of these diverse groups of trainees had different values and perspectives on work and safety. It was imperative that the trainers understood these perspectives in order to effectively connect with the workers in these age groups. In addition, each of the trainees received and processed information differently. The need was to understand this; hence formatting the training to attain the best retention was the main focus during the sessions.

Some latent issues which required to be addressed were:

1. Some of the trainees have been working in their respective trades for 20 to 30 years and they have seen and experienced much more than their younger co-workers, and were more likely to recognize the importance of safety. However, their knowledge and experience lead them to believe they don't need training, or also presume that they already knew the proper way of doing things.
2. On the other hand there were workers who had less experience than the seniors, yet very knowledgeable in their fields of expertise. These participants were more cynical and distrustful of authority, which led to resistance to training at time. However, they typically were very family and life focused, ushering in the idea of work-life balance. As a result, the trainer had to emphasize on the importance of the overall health and safety benefits to the person and his family.

3. The young lot of participants had their own set of issues. Though on one hand they responded well to mentoring, and were able to multitask with ease, they had a short attention span. So the trainer had to include activities on team building, group dynamics, and other energizers.

One Size Does Not Fit All

Given the differences between age as well as experience of each of the participants, the “one size fits all” safety training would not have worked for everyone. The training sessions had to have the right blend of content and also the right appeal to address a diverse set of participants. Blending each group’s preferred style helped trainers to connect better with their participants, and inevitably allow the groups to learn from each other.

1. The participants were kept engaged using graphics and a variety of teaching tools which helped in keeping all of them interested. This also led to higher message retention.
2. Participants were encouraged to do group discussions in the training session, images that included safety errors were presented in class, and they were asked to find them and to discuss safe alternatives and techniques.
3. Hands on demonstration were conducted; it was another interactive approach which kept the participants engaged through the entire class, while at the same time prepared them for real work situations.
4. Site-walks, demos, graphics, and videos of hazardous working styles were some of the activities used at different stages to create different kinds of impacts of the participants.

A sample of the stories of people whose lives have been changed for the better through the initiatives of LabourNet can be found in Annexure 2.

Special Highlights of the LabourNet BBS program

1. A first of its kind training, done in India, in the area of Safety and Crisis Management, delivered through the principles of **BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE**.
2. Original training design -VAK (Values, Attitude and Knowledge)
3. People centric training delivery
4. Client centric content prepared for each module (customised according to demographics, hierarchy and RPL)
5. Training evaluation and certification was based on MCQ, Written Examination, Viva, and Formative Assessments

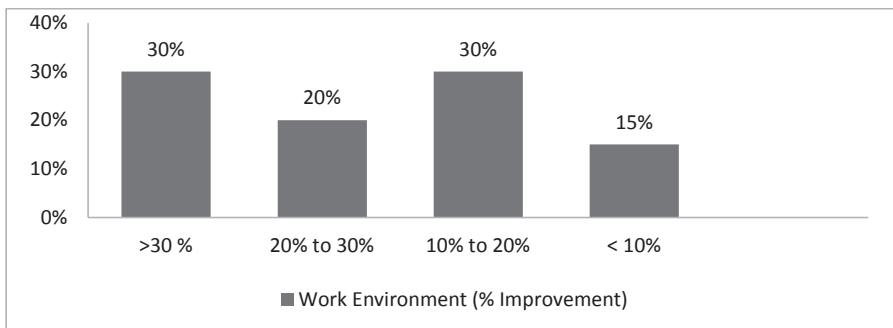
6. To encourage participants to proactively participate in the training sessions, they were honoured for their achievements with medals and trophies
7. The activities were designed keeping in mind the sensitivities of the participants
8. Medium of instruction was as per client requirement. At many places the trainers or the co-trainers who spoke the local language pitched in to make concepts easily understandable
9. Absolute team work of members chosen for training, each one playing their role very effectively and exclusively
10. The program catered to a diverse group of trainees who were culturally, educationally, and hierarchically different.
11. The sessions were well planned and the props and other materials used for the sessions were prepared well in advance to execute a smooth and successful session

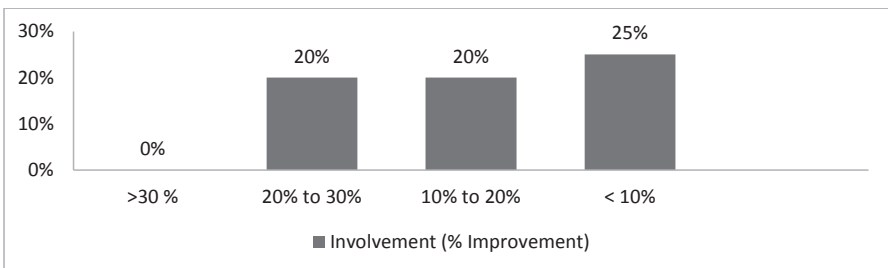
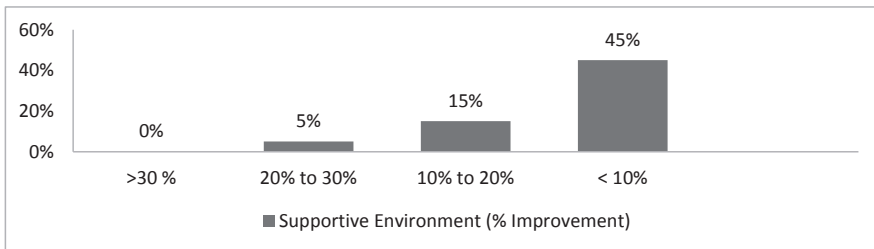
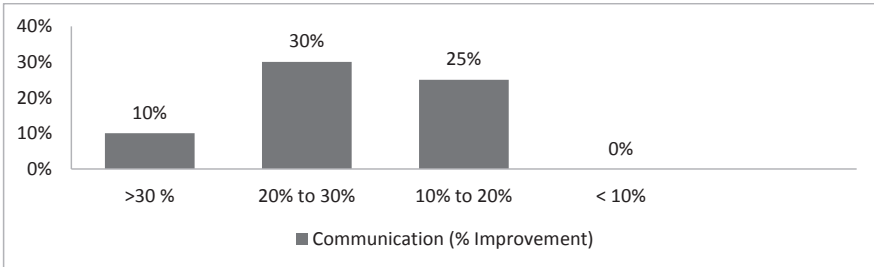
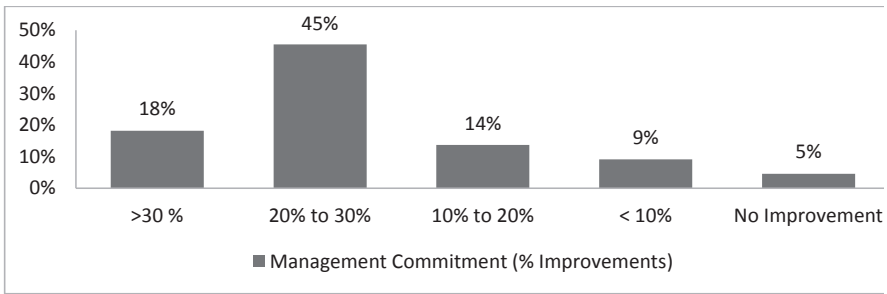
Impact of the Programme

An analysis of post BBS training -safety climate survey was conducted at the ABB Site. Feedback was received through 3 questionnaires:

- Training feedback questionnaire
- Post BBS training questionnaire
- Behaviour based safety questionnaire

The survey had been conducted around five important attributes related to a workers working on-site i.e. Management commitment, Communication, Supportive Environment, Involvement and Work Environment. A pre-survey had indicated most participants to be on a low scale on all these attributes – the scores from the post survey connected with the anecdotal feedback received about the success of the programme in making safety on-going cultural phenomena at the workplace and also cascading into the labour camps. The impact (improvements on various dimensions) have been shared below:





- 22% of the client sites had shown about 30% improvement in Work Environment.
- Almost 50% of the clients observed more than 30% improvement in employees' attitude towards Management's commitment towards their safety.
- 30% of the employers found that there was about 25-30% improvement in the communication levels between workers-supervisors -managers.

45% of the employees felt that there was less than 10% supportive environment

A snapshot of real life success stories can be found in Annexure 1.

Summary

With the rapid development of urbanization in India, in this case Bangalore, the number and size of development projects are increasing quickly and at an alarmingly rapid pace. At the same time, more and more freak and untoward accidents at the work-sites are causing construction at Metro sites to increasingly become a focus of social attention.

The construction industry is a booming sector in India, unfortunately the work-force which is the major contributor for the success of any projects is treated with very little dignity. At most Metro sites the basic human rights are violated and workers work in sub-human conditions. The apathy is at large, and no single solution can be arrived at or concluded to improve the quality of living of these workers. However, radical steps taken in the direction of better Labor Laws, stricter construction norms and harsher punishments for violation of basic human rights could not only improve the living conditions of these workers but enable them to work better, which in turn could lead to better productivity and income increase (due to no-person work days lost due to accidents/ injuries).

The 11-day (96 hours) intensive Behavior Based Training Program conducted by LabourNet Services (I) Pvt. Ltd at 15 Construction Sites across Bangalore, where approximately 1000 participants (Workers, Supervisors and Managers) were trained was a step taken in this direction. The L&D team's extensive research highlighted a few important characteristics of people, i.e their Values, Attitudes, Behavior and Knowledge(VAK). Based on the principle of VAK it was established that the responsibility of maintaining safety and following safety rules lies on each and every individual working on the job-site. Following rules is a mandate not only for a worker but also a supervisor who is overlooking the job work, therefore:

- (a) The execution of any work has to be conducted in a safe manner under supervision;
- (b) The safe conduct of the crew is mandatory under supervision; and
- (c) The safety of all workers under supervision at all times and at any cost.

It makes good sense to hold supervisors responsible for the employees placed under their charge. It builds a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for safe productivity.

Supervisors are generally closer to the employees under their charge and better able to positively influence positive behavioural change.

The construction industry has a high employee turnover and the migratory worker population is a floating one that keeps moving back and forth between urban and rural areas. Therefore these training programs are not a one-shot solution but need to be a continuous and an on-going endeavour to ensure that every employee is educated on the safety requirements on the job and a culture of “safety above all” is perpetuated.

ANNEXURE 1

A Snapshot of the Success Stories

Case 1: LAKSHMIPATI P. is a 26 year old native of Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh and currently works as a Senior Engineer for the Delhi Metro. He has over 6 years' experience in the construction vertical and has experience in building construction and bridge construction works. Lakshmiapati has been working in the Metro Project at its various locations, mainly Chennai and Delhi for the last 2 years. Working on the Metro site was no different from working on any of the other projects for him, until the BBS training happened last September.

The 96 Hours (11 days) on-site training program was an eye-opener in more than one ways for him. He had a complete 360 degree shift, in his attitude and behaviour after the program. According to him, though most of the Supervisors and Managers are aware of the safety requirements on job-sites, there is no emphasis on them. One of the reasons cited for this casual attitude was that most workers feel that wearing a harness or a helmet or a welding glass is an over-hyped requirement.

He feels that the BBS training gave him an in-depth awareness about his responsibility towards himself as well as each and every worker, on his site. Furthermore, the training has enabled him to effectively communicate the importance of safety to his sub-ordinates. Today, Lakshmiapati personally supervises and checks on the level of safety on each of the sites he visits. He says it's a mandate on the site for each worker who handles tools or machines that he follows the safety norms as laid down by the company. He conducts awareness sessions on safety for the new recruit and cautions them on the hazards and implications of not following safety rules. They have introduced "Safest Worker On-Site" incentive to the workers to encourage them to adhere to Safety Norms at the site.

Case 2: MANJEET SHARMA is a welder by profession and is a native of Badalgad, Haryana. He is employed with the Delhi Metro Works since 2007. Manjeet is the only earning person of a 5-member family and travels almost 12 kms everyday to his work place. He earns Rs. 361 per day and leads a very humble life.

With all these hardships, Manjeet is a happy man today. He feels a person coming from his background, lacks knowledge as well as awareness about how safety plays an important role on the work site. Before he attended the 96 hours (11 days) program, Manjeet like any other welder never used safety glasses or gloves on the work-site. The training exposed Manjeet to the hazards of unsafe practices on the work-site and how any unfortunate event or unforeseen errors, in a fraction of a second, could be a matter of life and death for a person. It also made him realize how casually he had been treating his own life! There is a good indication of behaviour change

in Manjeet, as today, he not only follows the required safety norms but also encourages trainee welders to inculcate the habit of being safe. In his own words “Unless being safe becomes a habit, people will remain unsafe!”

ANNEXURE 2

Snapshot of Curriculum

‘Work at heights’ Safety Outline for BMRC

Introduction & Ice Breaker

Statistics of work at height accidents with focus on BMRC

Consequences of fall from height - (Videos embedded)

Narration of fall from height accidents by Participants

Fall from height accidents (Videos embedded)

Hazard Identification at BMRC Study Tour with Trainer/SME

Strategy to avoid accidents Participative Session

Behaviour - Root Cause of fall from height accidents

Role Plays on Causes Leading to accident

Role Plays on Emergency (accident) Response

Technical Recap Sessions

Basics of work at height

Scaffolding

Ladders

Platforms

Elevated platforms

Fall protection

Applicable Standards

PPE

Safety Devices

Quality of Materials

What went wrong and how to avoid recurrence (Interactive Sessions with Photographs/ Videos)

Above Ground Level

Below the Ground Level

Legal Aspects

Work at height Safety Audit - Participative Session

Conclusion & Pledge

Safai Mitras: A Facelift to the Rag pickers and Sweepers

Manish Maskara and Sonakshi Anand

Subodh (name changed), belonged to the Musahar community and took to rag-picking¹ when he migrated from his native village to the city around 15 years ago. He would collect rags and other waste from streets and garbage-dumps around Buddha Colony in Patna, Bihar (India) and sell them to itinerant buyers, which earned him a paltry sum of Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per day on an average, that could go up to a maximum of Rs. 100 on a good day. Though this meagre earning was insufficient for running his household in an urban setting, he had no option! Each day brought new challenges and struggles that included social ostracism and police atrocities. He had no 'voice' in the society!

But Subodh was not alone in his struggle. There were a thousand rag pickers like him, who were going through similar experiences. In the year 2000, Nidan, an organization based in Patna, identified the rag-pickers and their issues and started strategic intervention to bring about positive changes in their lives.

How this was made possible is a story of hope and enormous will-power backed by firm conviction to make it happen...

Background

The rag-pickers and sweepers mainly belonged to the Musahar, or the 'rat seekers' community belonging to the 'social category' of Scheduled Castes or SC. 'Scheduled Castes' in India, is the legal and constitutional name collectively given to groups that have traditionally occupied the lowest status in the society, inferior to all other castes. Their socio-economic status was always considered low and they were treated as 'untouchables'. Post-Independence, various legal safeguards to guarantee the rights of SCs were put in place and untouchability, now, is considered a crime against law. However, even as the social-economic-political-legal situation changed, Musahars, because of the nature of their occupation, were still treated as 'untouchables' in India for a long time. ²

Lack of livelihood options in the village compelled the Musahars to migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. But, even in the urban areas, rag picking and sweeping became their easiest option for income generation. The Musahars, thus became the rag pickers and sweepers in the city!

¹ Rag-picking is a profession which involves people who are employed in waste recycling, starting from waste picking to operating small junk shops and operating reprocessing factories. (*Definition by Chintan, NGO*)

² Mukul, 1999, 'The Untouchable Present- The Everyday life of Musahars in North Bihar', *Economic and Political Weekly*, December 4, pp. 3465-70.

But, their 'occupational hazards' were many:

- Their earning potential was a meagre Rs. 50–60 after a full day's toil and this too was irregular and variable to the quantity of waste collected and depended on their negotiation skills with the buyers in a city like Patna till the year 2000
- This irregularity in income deprived them of access to basic necessities like proper housing, food, potable water etc.
- In order to sustain themselves, they were often forced to involve other members of their family, including their children, in rag picking, thereby depriving them of education.
- They were susceptible to diseases including skin problems, fatigue, stomach ailments due to lack of hygiene as well as addiction to alcoholism, guthka, smoking and other substance abuse often took a toll on their health.

Other geographical and situational factors added to the complexity of their problems. Despite an increasing investment by Bihar Urban Development Department on Solid Waste Management (collection, segregation, transportation, disposal and recycling), Patna Nagar Nigam (PNN) was merely capable of collecting around 40–50% of the total solid waste generated per day in Patna.³ Around 60% of the estimated 650–800 MT of waste generated⁴ was left on the streets which led to drain blockages, soil and ground water pollution that resulted in acute unhygienic conditions, causing a major threat to public health.⁵

This quantum of waste was collected, segregated and to some extent, transported by the traditional rag pickers and sweepers of the city.⁶ Thus, though the rag pickers were augmenting the work of PNN, yet there was little or no recognition of the contribution of this workforce to the city's solid waste management.⁷

NGO Chintan, rightly pointed out that rag pickers '*are unrecognized, have no voice and almost no rights to work, despite the fact that they save approximately 14% of the municipal budget annually. In Delhi, the army of almost 80,000 estimated waste pickers save the city at least Rs 6 lakh daily through their work.*'⁸

To top that, the emergence of private sector players to combat the problem of solid waste management in Patna put a question mark on the sustainability of the traditional livelihood of the rag pickers and sweepers of the city.

³ CDP, 'Patna under JNNURM, Urban Development Department', Bihar Urban Development Agency, Nov. 2006, pp. 64 - 66.

⁴ *ibid*, pp. 64

⁵ CDP, 'Patna under JNNURM, Urban Development Department', Bihar Urban Development Agency, Nov. 2006, pp. 66

⁶ Paper on rag pickers, Pratham (http://pratham.org/images/Paper_on_ragpickers.pdf)

⁷ Chengappa, Chaya, Organizing Informal Waste pickers - A case study of Bengaluru, India, March 2013, WIEGO

⁸ Paper on rag pickers, Pratham (http://pratham.org/images/Paper_on_ragpickers.pdf)

The community of rag pickers, sweepers and domestic help thus lacked livelihood security. Though the society was dependent on the community for cleaning of their household and offices, yet their occupation was not perceived as vital. The introduction of newer technologies of waste management in the urban localities and low social acceptance of rag pickers, created the problem of 'double bind' which in turn, threatened the sustainability of the livelihoods of the community.⁹

The Intervention by NIDAN

It is against this backdrop that Nidan, an NGO based in Patna started working towards strengthening the livelihoods of these rag pickers and sweepers of the city in 2000 as a pilot initiative. As a first phase, Nidan began by 're-naming' the rag pickers and sweepers Safai Mitras.

To take this initiative forward, Nidan decided to create a registered institution which could help in providing regular and dignified work to the thousands of Safai Mitras involved in the collection of rags and other cleaning related tasks. In October 2001, the UNICEF field office for Bihar initiated the **Chakachak Patna Abhiyan (Clean Patna Campaign)**, where the initiators decided that rather than setting up yet another organization to undertake the task, a network of existing individual organizations could be formed where each could bring to bear its existing priorities and skills to the common cause.

Nidan, acted as the secretariat and coordinated with all the partners. The network's primary objective was to create a platform for civic action, where, one of the key activities undertaken was to improve the working conditions of the rag pickers, who played a major role in sorting and recycling the city's garbage.

Formation of a co-operative with the name **Swachhdhara Swalambi Sahkari Samiti** was initiated in 2002 to organize the Safai Mitras. However, for more than two years, Nidan could not register the co-operative as the Safai Mitras did not have permanent proof of address, and, thus, could not become its executive members. Eventually with the help of Nidan, Nidan Swachhdhara Private Limited (NSPL) was registered under the Companies Act, 1956 in 2008. Later in 2009, domestic workers were also added under this banner.

Around 1150 rag pickers were organized into 102 self-help groups (SHGs). Of the rag pickers, 387 enrolled as Safai Mitras by 2007. They collected garbage from 18,500 households and 200 institutions, including hotels and offices. NSPL sensitized the society through seminars, training and workshops to ensure the mainstreaming of Safai Mitras. Sensitization campaigns were conducted that included drawing workshops for children,

⁹ Lyla Mehta, "The Double-Bind: A Gender Analysis of Forced Displacement and Resettlement," *Displaced by Development: Confronting Marginalization and Gender Injustice*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, Pp. 3-33.

'Nagrik Sabhas' (sensitization programmes for citizens) and HIV/AIDS awareness programmes. NSPL also enabled Safai Mitras with access to social security schemes on health and education and trained them in modern methods of solid waste management. NSPL took up the task of solid waste management to supplement the efforts of PNN in making Patna a garbage free city. Funding for all the above activities came from public-private partnership (PPP) with PNN. In addition, the American India Foundation also actively supported the waste management project of NSPL.

The Model

Initially, NSPL approached the rag pickers and sweepers in the city and brought them under the banner of Safai Mitras, but by 2009-10, domestic workers were also included under the same banner. NSPL also engaged itself in the recruitment and selection of support staff for the task of coordinating and managing the work of Safai Mitras in the process of solid waste management. Support staff acted as supervisors and wards in-charge for waste collection and disposal in different areas. They were also engaged in mobilizing more Safai Mitras.

The Safai Mitras were involved in door-to-door garbage collection from households and offices, segregation and disposal of the same, apart from sweeping the streets. While majority of those engaged in door-to-door garbage collection were men as they had to drive/push waste-laden carts, most of the Safai Mitras in sweeping were women. In addition to this, both men and women were engaged in housekeeping at government offices and academic institutes.

NSPL started operating in seven areas of Patna:

1. Patliputra/ Gola Road
2. Buddha Colony
3. Boring Road
4. Exhibition Road
5. Raza Bazar
6. Kankarbagh
7. Rajendra Nagar

Table 1 gives an idea about the operational model of NSPL.

Table 1: Operation of NSPL in Patna

| Area | No. of HHs | No. of INS | No. of SM | No. of WI | No. of Org |
|----------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Patliputra/Gola Road | 14 | 31 | 34 | 1 | 3 |
| Buddha Colony | 168 | 23 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| Boring Road | 70 | 15 | 12 | 1 | 0 |
| Exhibition Road | 22 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Raza Bazar | 74 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Kankarbagh | 727 | 16 | 18 | 0 | 2 |
| Rajendra Nagar | 307 | 38 | 11 | 0 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 1360 HHs | 147 INS | 92 SMs | 3 W.Is | 9 Orgs |

Note: Each area has households (HHs) and institutions (INS) such as offices, restaurants and residential apartments from where waste is collected. A particular number of Safai Mitras (SM) work in each of these areas under organizers (Org) who then function under Ward In-charge (WI) acting as single point of contact (SPOC).

Source: Nidan Office, Patna

NSPL provided training and built the capacities of the Safai Mitras. The training comprised of sessions in sanitation, hygiene, livelihood, self-discipline, outlook and presentation and communication with people.¹⁰ They were also trained on collection and segregation of dry recyclable and organic waste. They were provided with uniform, gloves, ID cards, whistle and raincoat to give them the status of professional service providers.

In the words of Subodh, 'For my learning on waste management and segregation, Nidan SwachhDhara Private Limited (NSPL) even took me to Singapore to understand the working there. Just as a child is sent to school to learn, I have learnt from my involvement with Nidan. I now get a fixed income and time to engage in other traditional odd jobs to supplement my income. I now have hope for myself and my family.'

NSPL also mobilized and channelized the staff of PNN for licensing their solid waste management company. They formed a resident body and units at the ward level in Patna for proper identification of households and institutions from where waste could be collected. NSPL also collaborated with government schools and opened schools in the slum areas for the education of the children of the Safai Mitras. The children were provided with school uniform and stationery. NSPL also tied up with government hospitals for health check-ups.

¹⁰ Nidan: their website (http://nidan.in/otherpage.php?page_code_no=14)

The salary of the Safai Mitras, ranges from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 per month, while the supervisor and ward in-charge responsible for coordinating the work of Safai Mitras earn in the range of Rs. 2500 to Rs. 4000 per month. Their working hours are from 6 am to 2 pm, six days a week with holidays on Sundays and national holidays.

After collecting garbage from door-to-door in their push carts, the Safai Mitras dispose off the garbage at dumping sites from where the municipality collects the waste in their vans. In addition to this, they segregate the saleable waste and earn additional income by selling it to buyers. Being regular employees, their salary is deducted on absenteeism from their job. The members of NSPL receive dual benefits that include salary from being regular employees and access to multiple financial services through Sanchay.¹¹ Safai Mitras are appointed as Directors to the Board and encouraged to become equity-partners at NSPL owing to Nidan's vision of community ownership.

The Impact

The socio-economic conditions of the Safai Mitras have definitely improved as a result of the intervention by Nidan. Individual rag pickers, sweepers and domestic workers have been organized for household garbage collection. This association gives them 'voice' in the social space. They are also granted social acceptance and brought into mainstream society.

Strengthening and Promoting Sustainable Livelihood

NSPL has strengthened and promoted the livelihoods of the rag pickers and sweepers, by training the Safai Mitras in techniques of waste collection and segregation. They are now able to isolate and sell the saleable waste to the itinerant buyers for additional earning, apart from having a positive impact on the environment. This has enhanced their skills and turned them into professionals in waste management. This has been a replicable social model and has been scaled to cover cities like Jaipur, Delhi, Bokaro (Jharkhand) and Muzzafarpur (Bihar), apart from Patna, where it started.

Access to Financial Services

In order to provide the community access to financial services, the rag pickers and sweepers have been organized into self-help groups. They meet regularly to access credit and micro-insurance. Basic premium for a member is Rs. 125 per annum, which covers illness, normal death, accidental death, death of the spouse in accident, damage to property, and loss of employment.¹² With some more premium, members can take additional cover like partial disability and/or total disability.

¹¹ A credit co-operative of Nidan which can be accessed by women for their thrift and credit needs.

¹² Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action, Evaluation of AIF-NIDAAN Project "Strengthening Livelihoods of Rag pickers and Sweepers", The American India Foundation, New Delhi, 4th April, 2013.

Assured Income

Before NSPL was created, the rag pickers were not sure of their earnings. Though they toiled through the day, all they earned was a meagre sum of Rs. 50–60 per day. During monsoon, the situation would become worse. Now the **Safai Mitras** are assured of a regular income of Rs. 2000 per month for rag pickers (with an additional opportunity of extra income from selling scraps) and Rs. 2500 per month for sweepers for services rendered six days per week. The regularity in income provides them with financial security, reducing their dependence on loans and itinerant scrap buyers.

On being asked about their total household income, one of the women **Safai Mitras** engaged in house-keeping, replied: *'Humko toh 2700 milta hai Nidan se. Husband bhi kama leta hai idhar udhar daily mazdoori kar ke. Mila jula ke 5000-6000 rupya toh aamdani ho jata hai ghar mein....'* (I get Rs. 2700 from Nidan. My husband also earns through daily casual work. The total monthly household income comes to Rs. 5000–6000)

Restored Dignity

Rag pickers who were earlier branded as thieves and abused or beaten up at the slightest excuse are now called Safai Mitras and let inside the residential areas.

A Recognized Identity

Every Safai Mitra is provided with a uniform that includes a cap, gloves, and boots. This gives them a sense of identity and they have begun to see themselves as people who do 'respectable work'. The intervention by Nidan has instilled in them a sense of self-worth and pride in their job.

Children's Education and Health Facilities

There is an increase in awareness among Safai Mitras about the need to educate their children. Almost all the Safai Mitras who have children, send them to school, while the remaining also have plans to do the same. Apart from education for their children, health check-ups and medical services have also been extended through tie-ups with hospitals. The Safai Mitras have also been made aware of the positive effects of maintaining hygiene and living a healthy life. The notion of the job being 'dirty' has been changed through instilling in them a sense of cleanliness. The chances of catching diseases related to stomach and skin and other infections have reduced because of the uniform and protective gear, like boots, masks and gloves that they now wear.

Challenges Faced

Nidan has faced many challenges on its way and is still learning through its experiences. The scaling up of the intervention was fast, from 6 Safai

Mitras in 2000 to 387 in four years. However, since then, there has been a decline in the number of Safai Mitras to 92.

The reasons can be attributed to the major challenges that Nidan has faced as discussed below:

Challenges Related to the Organisation

The classical 'chicken and egg problem in a start-up: Nidan faced various issues and challenges while trying to consolidate and expand its work. On one hand, the intervention had to ensure financial and operational sustainability and on the other, enrolment of Safai Mitras became difficult with stagnation in the number of households and institutions for collection of garbage.

Operational issues: The municipality did not allot a site to NSPL for dumping the collected waste. Indiscriminate dumping of waste by Safai Mitras as a result of non-availability of designated sites led to additional work for the municipality. As a result, the municipal inspectors would often beat up and harass the Safai Mitras. Huge dues with the municipality affected the working capital flow of NSPL and led to termination of contracts of many Safai Mitras.

Challenges Related to Safai Mitras

Lifestyle issues: Social illnesses like alcoholism and use of gutka and tobacco among the Safai Mitras was an obstacle to the work of NSPL. Despite training and awareness drives these addictions were difficult to eliminate. NSPL received complaints from their clients, as sometimes the Safai Mitras would not turn up for work or arrive late in a drunken state.

Required manpower shortage: The inability of NSPL in getting the right manpower (supervisors and organizers) for coordinating the work of Safai Mitras became a constraint. As a result, NSPL lost many clients. At the same time, ironically, NSPL was unable to absorb all Safai Mitras as full time workers at the ground level.

Challenges Related to Salary

Irregularity in salary disbursement: Unforeseen expenditures often led to irregularity in salary disbursement by NSPL to Safai Mitras that led to a lot of bad-mouthing by the supervisors and ward in-charge. .

Salary discrimination: Another challenge for NSPL was to meet the demand for increase in salary of Safai Mitras. Some clients were ready to pay additional fees to NSPL as they were happy with the job of the Safai Mitras. This, however, was not the case with all. NSPL therefore found it difficult to ensure parity across wage scales. It was in constant search of solutions to match up to the expectations of all Safai Mitras in a standardized manner.

Challenges Related to Stakeholder

Stakeholder attitude: Another key challenge was the lack of participation from people of Patna. They did not see segregating waste as their responsibility. For them, it was the job of PNN or the Safai Mitras. The argument they would make was that they were paying taxes to the municipality to remove garbage, and hence, segregation was the task of the municipality. Though NSPL tried hard to convince the people for managing their waste at the household level, it could not bring about any change in their attitude. The Safai Mitras had to continue to carry out the waste segregation task that increased their daily load.

Expectation mismatch: Many clients were not agreeable to giving Sundays off. Client such as restaurant and hotel owners had an expectation that Safai Mitras would collect garbage twice in a day. These terms were not acceptable to the Safai Mitras, making the job of NSPL difficult.

Overcoming the Challenges

Although the challenges are steep, the issues can be resolved. Timely payment of salaries to the Safai Mitras can be handled by scheduling and channelizing the necessary working capital. The role of the government is critical in facilitating the partnership between municipalities and intervening agency for solid waste management in urban locations. It is known that Safai Mitras aid the task of the municipality in collecting waste. The support of the municipality would definitely go a long way in bringing about sustainability of the model floated by Nidan. The role of the citizens of urban localities is also crucial for ensuring social recognition to the 'Safai Mitras.' NSPL can set up client feedback mechanism to address the complaints of the clients.

The Road Ahead...

Having originated from Patna, NSPL has now expanded to cities like Jaipur, Delhi, Bokaro (Jharkhand) and Muzzafarpur (Bihar). Like all other start-ups, the project has gone through its share of ups and downs and transitions, but it has consistently made a positive impact on the lives of the Safai Mitras and the society. However, the replication of such an intervention across India surely requires an understanding of the reasons behind the issues faced during implementation in Patna.

NSPL plans to venture into diverse cleaning activities through skill enhancement of the Safai Mitras. The long term vision of the transfer of ownership of the intervention to the Safai Mitras cannot be achieved without proper information dissemination, capacity building and community participation. NIDAN is also working on organizing the work of waste-pickers for non-degradable waste and trying to enhance their capacity to dispose 70% of the garbage collected. They are trying to arrange sales of compost through various retail outlets.

NSPL needs to ensure that more rag pickers and sweepers enrol as its members. This would not only enhance livelihood security of the larger Safai Mitra community, but also help NSPL in meeting the demands of clients and in consolidating its services in the existing locations of the country. This would, in turn, help in reducing stress on the municipal task of solid waste management country-wide. This is critical not only for enhancing the livelihoods of the Safai Mitras and strengthening their position in the society; but also to bring about structure and system in providing cleanliness and hygiene in social living.

Empowering Women Ragpickers of Mumbai - Stree Mukti Sanghatana's Parisar Vikas Programme

Ansu Susan Alexander and Pooja Sunil Shetty

Introduction

Stree Mukti Sanghatana (SMS) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working towards women's liberation by creating awareness in the society about women's issues and creating employment opportunities for poor women. Established in 1975, its programmes and activities are targeted towards enabling women to become literate, self-reliant and confident. To achieve its objectives, SMS started a programme called Parisar Vikas in 1998.

This case study showcases the work being done by Parisar Vikas with poor, migrant women in Mumbai who work as rag pickers, to empower them, build up the economy and concurrently improve the environment.

Contextualizing Urban Poverty and Rag picking

The Bane of Urban Poverty

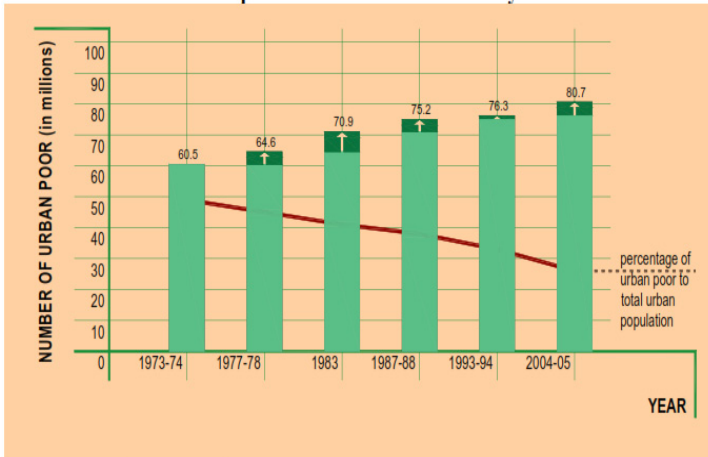
Developing countries are characteristically plagued by a high rate of population growth and crippling poverty. Among these countries, India has the highest concentration of poverty in the world, with around 320 million people living below the country's official poverty line – a staggering 35% of the total population. 75% of the global population growth is taking place in the urban areas of the developing countries causing a 'hyper growth' in cities, which are not equipped to cope with such a situation.¹ There are over 300 million urban poor who live in severe poverty in these cities of the developing countries. They have few options of livelihood, live in unsafe environments and face manifold threats to their health and security.² The dichotomy is that even as these cities are major contributors to the global economy and generate more opportunities, urban poverty persists and is indeed growing (Figure 1). This rising prevalence of urban poverty is indicative of the fact that the country's policies and programmes have not been able to alleviate poverty.³

¹ United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (2001). Cities in a Globalizing world. Global Report on Human Settlements

² World Development Report (1991). The Challenge of Development. World Bank

³ Human Development Report (2005)

Figure 1: Percentage of Urban Poor (1973- 2005)



Source: Planning Commission, 03 October 2011

With urban India's growing population has come increasing consumption and consequently, increasing quantities of waste. Due to the dearth of good waste-management policies in India, and given the zero awareness on recycling, all the waste ends up in landfills. Mumbai, the most populous city of India and the commercial capital of the nation generates approximately 7025 tonnes of waste per day.⁴ The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) manages waste in the city by collecting waste from communities and simply disposing it at the three main dumping sites currently servicing the city. The MCGM dumps and saturates their landfills and later turns them into real estate land. Mumbai initially comprised seven different islands and a lot of marshland. By filling the gaps, most of the land has now been reclaimed. Dharavi was formed out of a reclaimed landfill site. Deonar is currently the largest dumping ground in Mumbai and is home to thousands of migrants.

Enter the Rag picker

More than 90% of Indian cities and towns do not have a proper waste disposal system. The whole responsibility of garbage collection falls on the shoulders of rag pickers. Rag pickers collect garbage from dumping grounds, residential areas and street bins. They are among the 1.5 million⁵ little-seen workers who perform a vital role as they delve into the litter of modern life, recycling anything of worth and carefully disposing the rest. A major chunk of these people fall below the urban poverty level; they find livelihood opportunities through picking waste. Research indicates that as many as one in a hundred persons in a large city in India could be employed in waste recycling, starting from waste picking to operating small junk shops and even operating reprocessing factories. Of these, most

⁴ <http://urb.im/mm/120826ar>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

⁵ Chaturvedi, Bharati (2010). "Mainstreaming Waste Pickers and the Informal Recycling Sector in the Municipal Solid Waste."

are marginalised rag pickers and small waste dealers.⁶ There are more than three lakh rag pickers in Mumbai alone.⁷

Plight of the Woman Rag picker

Rag pickers are mostly women. There are also itinerant buyers who are mostly males. They purchase scrap directly from households, offices and shops but they need capital to be able to do the same. The rag pickers also do the unhealthy work of segregation. They get paid a pittance. They are dependent on middlemen who purchase segregated rag from them at pre-decided rates. These women are a part of the marginalised population. They live in very harsh conditions in slums, lacking even the most basic amenities.

The women rag pickers are mostly dalit or minority migrants who fled their villages because of poverty or drought or because the rural economy could not sustain them. Some migrate to Mumbai after marriage. They are part of the most vulnerable and downtrodden workers in the informal sector. Their work is seen as shameful and is not accepted by society. When they start working, it is perhaps only to supplement the family income. Later, this becomes the only source of income for most, as a large percentage of men stop working due to addiction to alcohol or leave their wives for younger women.⁸ As the sole breadwinner of the family, these women have to endure long working hours, starting at 5 a.m. in the morning. Girl children and older women earn lesser as compared to the younger women as they cannot meet the efficiency levels of the latter. They earn on a daily wage basis and the money is dependent on the quantity of waste collected. Thus, if one falls ill or cannot collect an adequate quantity of waste, it means a day without food. They are exploited by their bosses who pay them nominally and make a profit while selling the waste to factories.

Apathy towards the Rag picker

It is a distressing fact that the people who handle our waste are invisible – we neither recognize them nor acknowledge their role in society. While they keep our cities clean, the government does not fulfil its responsibilities towards them. Their work is hardly ever recognised by the official waste management system despite their large contribution to the system. Rag pickers are unrecognized and have almost no rights to work, despite the fact that they save almost 14% of the municipal budget annually.⁹ Staying blind to these 1.5 million rag pickers who contribute to the country's growth is one among the many reasons which lead to increasing urban poverty. Migrants who have no other support system invariably end up doing this work. When they come to the city they do not have access to identity cards or birth certificates, thereby barring them from accessing the basic governmental facilities which are intended to alleviate poverty.

⁶ Chinthan (2009) Carving Opportunities. A Manual to Facilitate Children Waste pickers Access Education

⁷ <http://www.mid-day.com/lifestyle/2013/may/290513-no-place-to-call-home.htm>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

⁸ Stree Mukti Sanghatana (2006), Evaluation of Stree Mukti Sanghatana Rag Picker Project

⁹ Chinthan (2003). Space for Waste. Planning for Informal Recycling Sector

These invisible environmentalists are discriminated against, harassed and hold very few economic and social rights even while they provide a valuable service.

Rag pickers as Carbon Assets

We need to look at rag pickers as carbon assets as they are negating the society's carbon footprint. The rights of rag pickers as part of the larger rights discourse framework are gaining significance in contemporary times. The requirement is to look at the government policies that are meant for poverty alleviation but end up marginalizing a large mass of the population. Unlike the early 90's, the dependence on long term and deep state subsidy is fading out. Instead, poverty alleviation strategies feasible in the market are favoured. These market ventures must be warranted on the basis of their self-sustaining capacity. Self help, profitability and longer-term sustainability are the mantras of current poverty alleviation strategies.¹⁰ If these are along the lines of social welfare and equity, these ventures must be embraced.

Stree Mukti Sanghatana (SMS)

It is in this context that it is vital to bring into the limelight the grass roots level work being done in the sphere of women rag pickers of Mumbai by SMS. The case study with the theme 'Sustainable livelihoods for the poor' can rightly be contextualised to SMS's contribution to the livelihoods of the urban poor and helping to change their poverty status. The main objective of SMS is to work towards creating conditions conducive to equality, by creating social awareness of marginalised, poor women's issues and generating employment opportunities for them.¹¹ The Parisar Vikas programme started by SMS in 1998 aims at empowering the women rag pickers of Mumbai by helping them to become literate and self-reliant and addressing the problems of these women engaged in the menial task of cleaning waste. It is to the credit of this programme that it also addresses the problem of waste management engulfing current urban existence.¹²

Parisar Vikas

Inception

SMS first got introduced to the women rag pickers during their conscience-raising programme in Govandi, near Deonar. As part of this programme, SMS was performing their popular and radical play called *Mulgi Zali ho* (Its a girl child). During their interactions, they realized that most of the women were rag pickers who had migrated from the Marathwada region of Maharashtra as a result of the frequent draught conditions that prevailed there. As rag picking is a job which requires low skills

¹⁰ Dandekar; Mahajan (2007) Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city: Women rag pickers of Mumbai.

¹¹ <http://streemukthisanghatana.org/>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

¹² <http://streemukthisanghatana.org/>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

and Deonar has a huge dumping ground, most of the women took to rag picking. This chance encounter was the genesis of the Parisar Vikas Programme.¹³

Objectives¹⁴

The objectives of the Parisar Vikas Programme are:

- To organize and train women rag pickers
- To try and improve the standard of living of women rag pickers by understanding their problems
- To create a 'zero waste' situation in our cities
- To keep our surroundings clean and green
- To help recycle waste appropriately
- To develop and use new techniques for the treatment of waste.

Women Rag pickers, called *parisar bhaginis*, are brought together and imparted training to acquire skills. They are also facilitated in terms of their children's education, their own literacy, savings groups formation and access to microcredit, health care and hygiene.

Scope of activities

Under this programme, the scope of activities undertaken by the *parisar bhaginis* are as follows:¹⁵

- Organizing the sorting of solid waste at municipal dump sites;
- taking on solid waste disposal and recycling contracts in privately-owned housing colonies and large corporations, and taking care of their solid waste on-site, off-grid, in more hygienic and less polluting ways;
- adopting innovations which include installation and use of bio-gas digesters for processing organic waste and generating usable methane gas;
- adopting construction and use of bio-gas digester prototypes which are efficient and scale appropriate to the site;
- utilizing enriched soil from biodigesters to develop nursery beds to grow and sell plants for landscaping; and,
- established contractual relationships with Tetra Pak, a multinational corporation, to recycle Tetra Pak's juice boxes which are constructed of layers of paper board, aluminium and



¹³ Dandekar; Mahajan (2007) Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city: Women rag pickers of Mumbai.

¹⁴ <http://streemuktisanghatana.org/>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

¹⁵ <http://streemuktisanghatana.org/>. Accessed on 11.09.2013

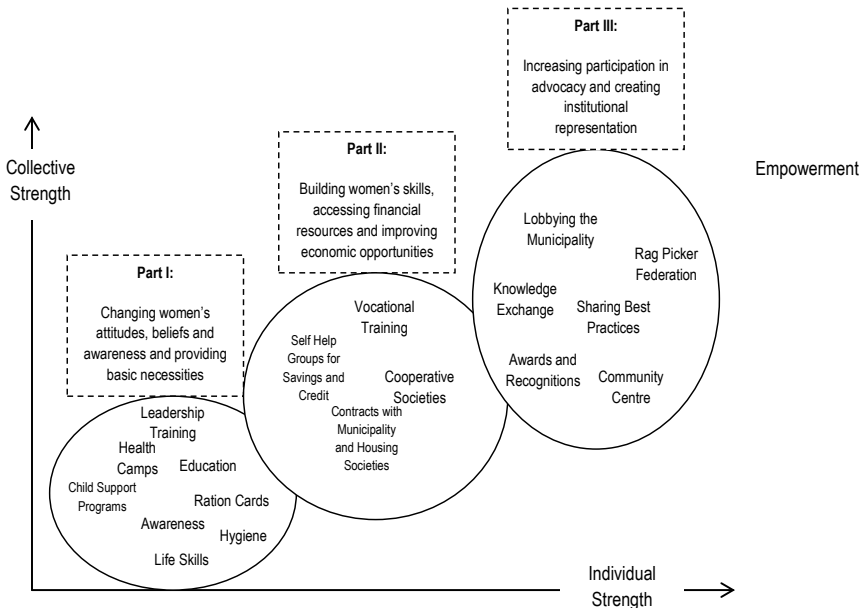
polyethylene. Their efforts contribute to reducing the volume of solid waste that must be disposed of by the municipal waste-management system.

Business Model

The Parisar Vikas programme differs from the more traditional social welfare approach. It involves economic development, job training and poverty alleviation, as well as efforts towards improving the environment by cleaning up and greening the city.¹⁶

Parisar Vikas works on a three-step model (Figure 2). Firstly, it aims at changing the deeply ingrained attitudes, beliefs and practices through suitable training modules. It ensures that the women themselves develop a sense of dignity towards the work they do. Secondly, it aims at empowering the women rag pickers, both at individual and collective level. Thirdly, it tries to strengthen the movement as a whole by creating institutional representation that can participate in advocacy and social change. This includes provision of identity cards which has changed the status of the workers from being scattered labourers to an organised worker force. It has taken the revolution a step further by staking a claim to the state resources.¹⁷

Figure 2: Parisar Vikas Business Model



Source: Stree Mukti Sanghatana (2006) *Evaluation of Stree Mukti Sanghatana Rag Picker Project*

¹⁶ Dandekar; Mahajan (2007) *Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city: Women rag pickers of Mumbai.*

¹⁷ Stree Mukti Sanghatana (2006), *Evaluation of Stree Mukti Sanghatana Rag Picker Project*

Problems Faced by Women Rag pickers

SMS conducted a survey of 2,000 women Rag pickers in 1998 to identify the problems of women rag pickers.

The survey highlighted the following facts:

- Rag picking is a caste and gender based activity.
- All rag pickers belong to the scheduled castes (dalits).
- The age group of rag pickers ranges from 7 years to 70 years.
- Women rag pickers comprise 85%, men rag pickers 10% and children rag pickers 5% of the workforce.
- 50% of rag pickers are single parents, with a large number of children.
- 90% of all rag pickers are the primary breadwinners for their families.
- 98% of rag pickers are illiterate.
- 98% of rag pickers have no alternative skills.
- All rag pickers are from drought-prone areas of Maharashtra and other southern states.
- Middlemen exploit rag pickers, leading to further deterioration of their position.
- Rag pickers suffer serious health hazards resulting from unhygienic work conditions. As they deal with toxic waste, respiratory diseases are common. Instances of tuberculosis (TB) are many. They suffer from dog and rat bites at their work places. Citizens indiscriminately discard biomedical waste and sharp objects such as needles, broken glasses, etc. Injuries from these are very common.
- Rag pickers are required to carry heavy loads and have no form of transportation. Because of the heavy load that they carry, most of them suffer from severe back pain.
- More than 50% of the children of rag pickers (especially girls) are out of school because they have to take care of their younger siblings. Most of them are married off at the age of 15–18 years.
- Due to poverty and malnutrition, most of them are anaemic. Due to early marriage, they face serious health problems during pregnancy and childbirth. Women have neither the time nor the money to look after their children and themselves. The community as a whole suffers from a high rate of infant mortality. Small ailments turn into serious problems due to lack of attention.
- The health facilities provided by the municipalities are inadequate. Most of them leave for work early in the morning and therefore cannot avail of the facilities at the health posts (which close at around 4 p.m.). Rag pickers therefore become victims of quacks who visit the community and also become victims of superstitions as they are illiterate.
- Rag pickers are the poorest of the poor in Mumbai and are unaware of their rights as citizens.

Getting Off the Ground

This survey gave a baseline for SMS to start the Parisar Vikas Programme with the support of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). MCGM has provided municipal-controlled land at strategic locations on lease for the rag pickers to work. SMS also approached MCGM for a grant of land to establish a training centre for rag pickers and a day-care centre for their children near the dumping ground in Deonar. The day-care centre was started so that mothers could leave their children here while they worked. It also enabled the girl children to pursue education as there was no need to stay back and take care of their siblings. Once the day-care centre started functioning, 75% of the girl children started going to school. A follow-up was also done to ensure that there were no dropouts.¹⁸ SMS has friends in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), who pitched in Rs 500 per girl child to aid education for the girls in the community. For this purpose, a piece of land near the existing municipal primary school was allotted by MCGM and a shed was constructed with a grant from War on Want, an anti-poverty charity based in London, England. The centre was inaugurated on the 11th of March 1999 by Ela Bhatt of the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA), Ahmedabad. The first effort at leadership training was started with classes for 50 women in July 2001. After the leadership training was concluded, the rag pickers entered into agreement with Tata Power and with the Naval Dockyard. Fifteen and twenty women worked under this contract at Tata Power and the Naval Dockyard, respectively. They would take the dry waste and let wet waste compost within the sites.¹⁹

MCGM also offered a piece of land of 2500 sq metres for composting of bio-waste at the dumping ground. At that time, the rag pickers did not have any knowledge about this technology. SMS grabbed this opportunity. Formal training was imparted to the women in gardening and composting with the help of Mahim Nature Park officials for a year, and by trainers from Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for four years. In November 2000, the Additional Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai inaugurated the vocational training centre for the rag pickers on the Deonar site.

Towards Enhanced Economy, Empowerment and an Improved Environment

In 2002, SMS received a maintenance contract for the Nisargaruna (biomethanation) plant²⁰ developed by BARC scientists with a capacity for treating 5 tons of biodegradable waste every day. SMS started by constructing four such plants and today they operate eight plants (Table 1). One of the plants has successfully generated electricity from the biogas generated. With the help of BARC, a 100 kg plant has been constructed to treat the waste from the canteens, thus contributing in a big way to the search for alternative fuel.

¹⁸ Interview with Mrs. Sunita Patil, dated 22.08.2013

¹⁹ Interview with Sunita Patil, dated 22.08.013

²⁰ See notes on Nisargaruna (Appendix A)

In the meantime, in 2002 a new government resolution (GR) was released which required that women co-operatives be formed for waste collection. Accordingly, 10 cooperatives with up to 50 members each were formed to procure waste management contracts with housing societies and industrial, educational and commercial complexes (**Table 2**). During 2003–2005, all contracts were transferred from SMS to the co-operatives except for the MCGM contract as there were lot of petty issues with them, and the TISS contract.

Table 1: Details of the 8 biogas plants

| S. No. | Contractor | Contract with |
|--------|------------------------------|---|
| 1 | 3 biogas plants at BARC | Contract transferred to co-operatives from MCGM |
| 2 | 1 biogas plant at Tata Power | |
| 3 | 1 biogas plant at TIFR | |
| 4 | 1 biogas plant at MCGM | Contract with SMS |
| 5 | 2 biogas plant at TISS | Contract with Federation |

Table 2: Details of the Cooperative Societies

| Ward Name | Cooperative Society | No. of Members |
|-----------|---------------------|----------------|
| M Ward | Amla | 48 |
| | Yashodhra | 42 |
| | Muktai | 23 |
| | Savitri Bai Phule | 23 |
| N Ward | Vasundhara | 48 |
| | Ramai | 48 |
| S Ward | Bimai | 44 |
| F Ward | Chaitanya | 49 |
| | Balasaheb | 48 |
| L Ward | Priyadarshini | 48 |

Source: Dandekar; Mahajan (2007) *Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city, Women rag pickers of Mumbai*

As mentioned earlier, Tata Power and Naval Dockyard had signed contracts with SMS in 2000. They agreed to give the biogas contract to the cooperatives but not the cleaning contract, as they wanted the cleaning contract to remain with SMS. Even with RBI, SMS has the contract for cleaning, and they then sub-contract it to the cooperatives. Other societies also demand contracts with SMS rather than cooperatives as they find SMS more reliable than cooperatives. A summary of work undertaken by SMS is at **Table 3**.

In November 2004, *parisar bhaginis* along with SMS experts participated in training of the staff, workers and residents of the Indian Petro Chemicals Limited (IPCL) township in Nagothane in Raigad district. Today, Nagothane township is the first petro-chemical township in India to achieve near 'zero waste'²¹ status.²²

Table 3: Summary of Work Undertaken by SMS

| Municipal Ward | Area | No. of Parisar Bhagini Working | No. of Households | Quantity of Dry Garbage in Kg per Day | Quantity of Wet Garbage in Kg per Day |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A | Colaba | 15 | 1501 | 1495 | 325 |
| F North | Sion-wadhala | 21 | 1101 | 1235 | 441 |
| F South | Parul | 4 | 78 | 35 | 250 |
| G North | Dharavi-Mahim | 46 | 245 | 1368 | 77 |
| G south | Wazali-Mahalaxmi | 10 | 600 | 280 | 325 |
| K east | Andheri | 6 | 840 | 475 | 40 |
| L | Kurla | 37 | 700 | 1360 | 30 |
| M east | Deonar-Chembur | 47 | 1868 | 3452 | 8720 |
| M west | Chembur | 34 | 2455 | 227 | 1053 |
| N | Ghatkopar-vikroli | 2 | 160 | 0 | 75 |
| S | Powai-Bhandup | 6 | 210 | 46 | 0 |
| T | | 26 | 1134 | 420 | 310 |
| Total | | 254 | 10892 | 10393 | 11646 |

Source: Dandekar; Mahajan (2007) *Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city: Women rag pickers of Mumbai.*

Parisar Vikas Bhagini Sangh (PVBS)

Parisar Vikas Bhagini Sangh (PVBS), a federation of saving groups of women rag pickers, was formed in 2005. It is also registered as a community development society with the MCGM. Two hundred *bachat gats* (savings groups) were formed. Each *gat* had 10 members before the formation of the Federation. Today, all savings groups are part of the Federation. The Federation charges each group an interest rate of 1.5% of the total loan given and the group further charges its members 2%; thus the Federation has a spread of 0.5%. The loan-disbursing process is more

²¹ Waste generated in your house is manageable waste. Do not send it to the dumping grounds. Segregate it at source into dry and wet waste. The wet waste goes to a manure pit near your locality. You can reuse it. The dry waste goes back to the manufacturer for recycling. What remains for the dumping ground is zilch!

Dry waste comprises of plastic, metal, thermocol, foam, glass, rexine, battery cells, paper, cloth, bulb tubes, rubber, etc. Wet waste comprises of vegetable waste, food waste, garden waste, coconut shells, wood pieces, nails, hair, eggshells, bones, flesh, used cotton, paper, etc.

²² Stree Mukti Sanghatan booklet

or less the same as it is with the savings groups, whereby the Federation internally discusses every detail regarding the group before disbursing the loan. The Federation has a fixed one-time membership fee of Rs 500, and Rs 100 per month is to be paid by a group.²³ If the performance of the *gat* is good for a period of six months, a grant of Rs 1000 is given to each member under the Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgaar Yojna (SJSRY) Scheme as seed capital to set up a micro-enterprise. In this way, one group received Rs 10,000 (10 members multiplied by Rs 1000 each). A total of 196 groups have got subsidies under the SJSRY to date. To avail the Scheme, it is mandatory to possess a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card. This work of helping women get the BPL cards is done by SMS. The Rs 10,000 received under the SJSRY Scheme has been split into two components – Rs 5000 with the Federation and Rs 5000 with the *bachat gat*. Thus, in case the *bachat gat* needs a loan, they can approach the Federation. This has generated a system of internal loans.

The women forming the savings groups come from the following eight areas:

- (1) Rafi Nagar
- (2) Jagruti Nagar
- (3) P.L. Lokhande Marg
- (4) Raman Mama
- (5) Pestom Sagar
- (6) Anand Nagar
- (7) Sathe Nagar
- (8) Pratiksha Nagar

Source: Dandekar; Mahajan (2007)
*Alleviating Poverty and Greening the city:
 Women rag pickers of Mumbai.*

The PVBS got access to five sorting centres under the SJSRY Scheme – Colaba, Wadala, Mulund, Chembur East and Chembur West. They also got a motorised vehicle for picking waste in seven wards.²⁴ The cost of operating the vehicle is borne by the MCGM. PVBS pays only for the electricity and water connection at the sorting centres. With the help of this vehicle, dry waste is collected by the PBVS from the women at market rates. This waste is re-sorted at the sorting centres and then sold to the recycling companies. They have been trained to do quality sorting which has eliminated the need for middlemen. Waste is sent directly to the factories. Also, depending on the value of the waste collected by the waste picker in a year, a 4% bonus which amounts to Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 is given at the time of the *Diwali* festival. Previously, the waste pickers used to get only a sari and some money from the middlemen as bonus.

Today, the Federation has diversified its activities and runs two canteens in the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) Campus, eight biogas plants and five sheds²⁵. It has also established a business of selling tetra packs to companies for recycling since 2005. PBVS does not have a VAT registration number. VAT adds to the cost and hence is not economical for the Federation. As a result of not having VAT registration, they cannot

²³ Stree Mukti Sanghatana (2006), Evaluation of Stree Mukti Sanghatana Rag Picker Project.

²⁴ Stree Mukti Sanghatana Annual Report January 2012 to December 2012.

²⁵ Five sheds were provided by the MCGM to parisar bhaginis and these are nothing but the sorting centers. These sheds are used for efficient sorting of the waste. The motorized vehicle provided by MCGM collects all the waste and finally brings it to the sheds for efficient waste segregation after which it goes to the recycling centers.

accept payments by cheque from the companies. PVBS and SMS formed a company called Sampurna Arth in 2005 which now handles the tetra pack domain. PBVS had signed a contract with a paper mill called Daman Ganga for selling of tetra packs. Unfortunately, in the year 2011, a fire engulfed the factory causing huge losses to the company. Thereafter, PBVS started selling the tetra packs to a company called Delux in Palghar. However, there are problems of late payments by the company. Parisar Sakhi Vikas Sangh, a federation of 500 women from Navi Mumbai, was formed in 2011.

Subsidy was given to two *bachat* groups to set up a stationery and grocery store. The stationery store is in operation and works on a barter system between the company and the store. The stationery store takes waste white paper from the company and gives it to the factory for recycling. The recycled paper is bought from the factory and given back to the company. Cash transfers take place only between the store and the recycling factory. As many as 35 Corporates have given contracts to the store; a few of these are Larsen and Toubro (L&T), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Tata Power.²⁶

Over the years, the number of women working as Rag pickers has reduced considerably. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the amount of waste that reaches the dumping ground has reduced considerably due to segregation at the doorstep and MCGM workers taking away some part of the waste. Secondly, after acquiring training in other skills many women have started getting different jobs, and many have reached the age of retirement. Thirdly, some women have their children working and earning sufficiently and hence they no longer want to engage themselves in this job.

Challenges²⁷

The following challenges need to be overcome:

- There is a great difficulty in developing trust among the women; 25% trust the PBVS but the rest do not.
- The problem faced by PBVS is that the women still prefer to sell their waste to the middlemen on account of two reasons (a) The long term relationship that has been established, and (b) The loan repayment that has to be done to the middlemen.
- Fund shortage: Initially, international funding was forthcoming but in 2012 there has been no international funding.
- Space constraints: Ten tonnes of quality material has to be sent to the companies and the five sorting centres do not have that capacity. The transportation costs are huge as the sorting centres are not linked or near the recycling factories.

²⁶ Interview with Sunita Patil, dated 22.08.013

²⁷ Interview with Jyoti Mhapsekar (President, SMS) and Vijaya Shrinivasan, dated 25.06.2013, and Sunita Patil, dated 22.08.2013, Stree Mukti Sanghatan Annual Report January 2012 to December 2012.

- Discrepancies in wage rates: Twenty-five women working in RBI get around Rs. 4000 for part-time work. Rag pickers who work in societies get less than this even after working full-time. Women working with Tata Power and the Naval Colony earn around Rs. 250 per day which works out to Rs. 6000–Rs. 7000 per month for a full-time job. Hence the women fight among themselves to work with the RBI.
- Problems of the old: Old women are not ready to retire as their contribution is necessary to the running of the household. It has been difficult to convince them. The NGO cannot allow them to work as it is against the law.
- Working with the urban local body: Pending payments from the BMC also put a financial load on the Federation. Also as per the annual report (2012), the issuing of BPL cards to the Rag pickers has been a very tedious process even after a GR has been passed that requires BPL cards to be issued to all Rag pickers.
- The Federation can give loans up to Rs. 30,000. However, there is a demand for loans in the bracket of Rs. 50,000–Rs. 1,00,000. The Federation cannot give a loan of more than Rs. 30,000 as it requires the permission of RBI for the same.
- The women perceive collection of dry waste to be more lucrative as they get daily wages after selling the same. The collection of wet waste does not provide short-term benefits as it involves a long process of converting the wet waste to saleable manure. As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to convince women to look for long-term benefits rather than the short-term ones.
- Vested interests in the transportation of waste, preference for centralised waste management, high-end technologies and promotion of environment-unfriendly incineration technologies are destroying the livelihood of the urban poor.
- There seems to be no clear position on the right to livelihood and right to garbage. Right to livelihood is a civil right and would thus extend to contractors as well. So the question of whose right prevails is important. Municipal workers feel that dry waste is their property. Thus, this also becomes a struggle between the organised and the unorganised sectors. Ironically, if cities really become clean and waste is segregated at source as per the Supreme Court's mandate, the waste pickers will become the first victims.

Sustainability of the model

Sustainability of the model is based on three E's – empowerment, economy and environment. It encourages the *bhaginis* to campaign for their rights and organize their livelihood, leading to empowerment; trains the *bhaginis* with skills and exposes them to self-help groups to achieve economic sustainability; and also creates a zero-waste situation of environmental sustainability.

Empowerment

Empowerment was brought about through SMS's intervention in their deeply engrained attitudes, beliefs and practices. They felt they were inferior as they were looked upon as dirty and as thieves. SMS carved out relevant training modules to cause tangible and immediate effects on the women's living style and to bring about motivation. Through leadership development, health and hygiene, human rights awareness, literacy, child education support and adolescent sensitization training, their mind set has changed and they now feel they are contributors to the society and the environment. The Federation gives the women a sense of identity and a sense of belonging. Previously, the women had no institution which specifically understood their needs and problems. This sense of identity in the women has led to immense confidence and a yearning for improving their lives. The issue of identity cards has increased their status in the community as well as in the dumping grounds. The change has been marked and they have learned to perceive things differently. This paradigm shift in their social, educational, health and economic status is solely due to SMS's untiring efforts and initiatives.

Economy

Initiatives of vocational skills training, creation of self-help groups for savings and credit have contributed to enhanced access by these women to financial resources where business opportunities are developed. The formation of cooperatives has led to access to waste management contracts according to the Management of Solid Waste Rules. This has in turn led to the transformation of the multitude of women who were not capable of coping with the challenges of being marginalized in the society. SMS has empowered them to raise their needs and demands and also provided them with new skills and economic opportunities to be independent.

Environment

SMS has always maintained that rag pickers, if trained, can process wet waste and recycle dry waste to create a near zero-waste situation in any given locality and thus play a crucial role in combating climate change. They have indeed implemented it through their Parisar Vikas Programme, thereby returning nature's resources back to nature. SMS has also negated the local government initiative to burn waste through the process of incineration or adopt refuse-derived fuel (RDF) technology or gasification which leads to heightened electricity consumption and is also harmful for the environment. Above all, these methods will lead to loss of livelihood for the millions of urban poor who are rag pickers. After having done an environmental impact assessment of their programme, it can be said that they reduce emissions by reusing/recycling dry waste, reduce emission of greenhouse gases and reduce carbon dioxide and fuel consumption. Use of biogas leads to reduced strain on fossil fuels and usage of organic manure leads to replacement of urea.

Replicability and Scalability of the Model

SMS has secured international funds for realizing their aspirations. It is expected that collaboration, sharing of resources and dissemination of lessons learned from their experiences will encourage similar initiatives across the globe. There has been intense engagement with the Global Alliance against Incinerators (GAIA) and Women in Informal Employment – Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) where SMS has shared their best practices across the globe. In their consultations at national and international forums organized by the above mentioned groups, SMS has understood the hitches in the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) where climate change is seen by developed countries as purchasing carbon credits by supporting green activities in developing countries while they do little to reduce their own carbon footprint in their own countries. This mechanism also ignores the contribution of rag pickers in their fight for climate change where marginalization of rag pickers occurs simultaneously. They are yet to realize the capability of rag pickers in solid-waste management. SMS supports the demand for rag picker's organizations across the globe and banning the burning of waste which destroys the livelihood of these rag pickers. They argue for recognizing the efforts of rag pickers and hence uplifting them.

Presently, SMS is working in half of the area covered by the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and in few other parts of Maharashtra. The working areas of NGOs do not overlap into to avoid conflicts. These models could be scaled down to local areas by NGOs and voluntary organizations with the minimal funds they receive or can be taken up by municipal corporations and scaled at a city level.

Challenge to Scalability

The lack of cooperation, vested interests in waste collection and transportation, lack of coordination and accountability at municipal levels despite their infrastructure and manpower all discourage voluntary organizations from upscaling their efforts. NGO initiatives and arrangements do not fit in their conventional contractual framework.²⁸

Conclusion

Women have been contributing significantly to the sustenance of the family. Today, more and more women form part of the labour force in the informal sector where they have to put up with the bad working conditions as their household depends on them. Even though invisible to the urban environment, their services are vital to the booming urban population. Especially in a developing country such as India, the municipalities do not undertake any recycling on their own as they still look at solid waste management from a traditional perspective starting from waste collection to disposal at some landfill site. Urban planning has

²⁸ Stree Mukti Sanghatana Booklet.

only reached the level where they allocate space for dumping grounds.

In this context, SMS has indeed identified a robust relationship between welfare and action through its innovative development model, the Parisar Vikas Programme. They have successfully developed the individual's spirited self to transit into a communal movement, enhancing their ability to intervene and also to gain equal rights. As we conclude this case study, it is evident that the multi-sectoral approach initiated by SMS has created an impact which has changed the lives of rag pickers. Skills training has assisted in opening doors to better economic opportunities, increased their access to basic amenities and enhanced the women's sense of well-being, thereby leading to a dynamic role in campaigning for their rights. This model has fashioned an institution that will function as an agency for social revolution for the rag pickers to create an everlasting impact both now and in the future in their homes and communities.

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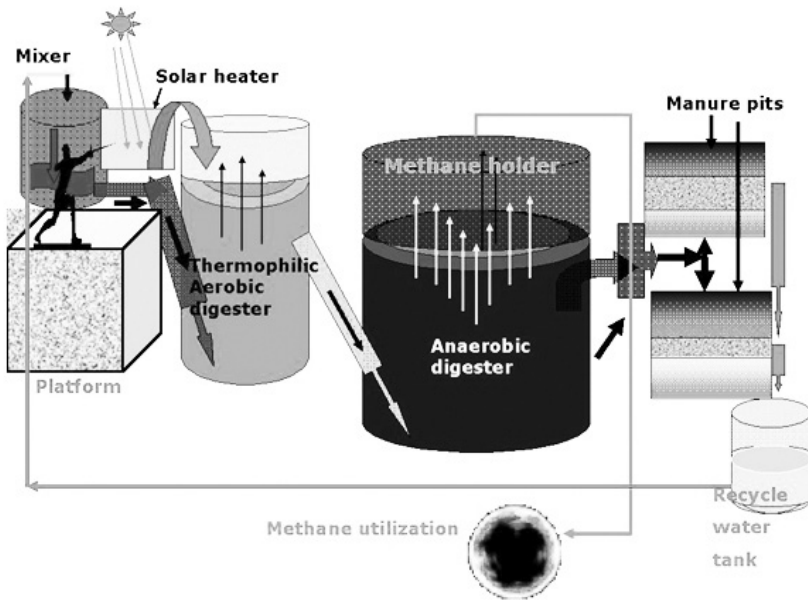
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ANNEXURE A

Brief on Nisargruna Technology

The Nisargruna technology offers a good decentralized alternative for processing the biodegradable waste generated on the premises of urban local bodies. The technology offers a comprehensive solution for handling the biodegradable waste material. It is based on the concept of maintaining the elemental balance in nature.



BARC's Nisargruna plant offers a 'zero garbage, zero effluent' method of waste disposal. There is good potential for energy generation in this biphasic biomethanation plant. A substantial portion of our biodegradable waste is food waste (38%–40%) which can generate about 60–100 m³ of biogas (about 20–30 kg of methane) per tonne of waste processed.

From Nowhere to Somewhere

Shiv Shankar Kumar

Introduction

Araria, Kishanganj and Purnia (also Purnea) are three districts of north Bihar, infamous for the trafficking of young girls and women. Even though not ordinarily evident, sex trade in Bihar is highly organized and cuts across urban and rural areas. While Gulabbag and Kasba in Purnia municipal area and Khagra and Kattalbari in Kishanganj town are urban bases for flesh trade, Bishanpur, Premnagar, Bibiganj and Samesar are located in haats (rural markets) and isolated places in villages. Similarly, Uttari Rampur is located in the town of Forbesganj whereas Khabaspur is in rural Araria.

Twenty kilometers away from Kishanganj town is another brothel, Panjipara, in the neighbouring North Dinajpur district of West Bengal, which has more sex workers than all brothels in Kishanganj, Purnia and Araria put together.

However, none of these are isolated or standalone in their activities or trafficking. Pimps from one brothel maintain relationship(s) and exchange information with other brothels belonging to these neighbouring districts.

These brothels trade in sex workers on the basis of rise and fall in demand at each location.

With support from the United State Department of State J/TIP office, Nomi Network ('Nomi') started a project for the women in trafficking or at the risk of trafficking in 2012. The women are based in Forbesganj in Araria district of Bihar, arguably the poorest state in India. In the initial two months, Nomi conducted a survey in and around the red light area of Forbesganj to assess the basic skills of the women and girls and their interest in alternate livelihoods.

Based on interviews of 44 sex-workers, this study outlines the socio-economic condition and behavioural responses of sex workers and captures the impact of the work done by Nomi Network in the lives of those involved in flesh trade in Araria district.

Profile of Victims and their Families

For effective intervention it is important to appraise the socio-economic condition of the victim's family before she entered commercial sexual exploitation.

Most of the vulnerable women suffered from low self-esteem. Poor levels of literacy and awareness were added risk factors. It was found that most of the victims had not received any kind of formal education. A number of girls who entered sex trade belonged to large families. Only a fourth of the respondents had a monthly family income of more than two thousand rupees. Many sex-workers interviewed were unable to give details of family income as they were minor or illiterate or both.

Poverty, illiteracy and lack of any vocational skill increased their susceptibility to enter the flesh trade. Economic deprivation and associated conditions were found to be the most significant underlying factors that led to increased vulnerability of these girls and women.

However, entering flesh trade seldom resulted in economic empowerment of the victim. While splitting of income received from commercial sexual exploitation is an integral part of flesh trade¹, only a few of the sex-workers interviewed received incomes from the brothel owner. Younger girls did not receive any money, as they had to pay back to the brothel the cost of their purchase. This binding was neither given to them in writing nor clearly mentioned orally. All going well, they will get monetary compensation after being in the trade for a few years.

Amongst the other prevailing circumstances in the family that the victims could recall were:

- Gender discrimination within the family
- Dysfunctional home environment
- Families facing uncertain times
- Children in substitute care
- Breaking-up of the family
- Marital discord
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Drug abuse
- Abandonment by husbands
- Husband acquiring a second or a third wife, etc.

Profile of the Pimps and their modus operandi

Pimps who recruit sex-workers are usually young men and middle-aged women. They are significantly older than the young girls or women that they target. These sex-work contractors travel often between home regions (towns or villages) and brothel areas (receiving regions) and

¹ Mukherjee and Das, 1996, "This sharing of income makes the nexus between procurers, pimps, brothel keepers, local goondas and police so strong that they together promote prostitution."

have significant linkages with the villages and towns where the victims originate from. Terms like '*dalal*' (agent) are commonly used to refer to pimps. Agents speak several dialects and languages.

These *dalals* are often neighbours, family-friends, relatives of a friend, migrant women or women friends returning from cities. Many pimps are either former prostitutes or are trying to escape forced prostitution by recruiting a substitute.

In some instances the agent could be a lover, boyfriend, husband or even the father. They either use friends and acquaintances to recruit sex-workers or rely on word of mouth.

It is observed that many of these agents indulge in dodgy activities like gambling and substance abuse, sometimes as part of their living. They can be drug peddlers, band leaders in dance-bars, head masons at construction sites or labour contractors.

The Vicious Life-cycle of a Sex Worker

Retired prostitutes who become pimps or sex work contractors (SWCs) are locally referred to as *Maushis*. Most of these *Maushis* entered the profession at a young age, because of either trafficking or family descentance (born in a brothel or born to a sex worker).

By the time they are thirty, a majority of sex workers start losing clients and therefore start searching for alternate livelihood. However, because they entered the sex trade at an early age and led a life away from the mainstream society, a majority of these sex workers are not ready for alternate livelihood. To cope with this vulnerability, they often resort to sex work contracting as a source of livelihood. They employ agents and leverage their network to procure young girls (trafficking), who will then work as prostitutes under their supervision. These SWCs live off the income of these sex workers.

The cycle of women oppressing women for the pleasure of men is also painfully evident in the issue of prostitution. As the city prostitutes age, their aim is to become 'madams' (or *Maushis*) who will live off the sale proceeds of their victimized young girls. Often prostitutes who bear female children will introduce them early to the world of the brothel.

Broadly, there are two systems of commissioning prevalent in these brothel areas. In the first, the *Maushis* or SWCs pay for the recruitment of the sex workers and takes care of their primary needs including food, clothes and shelter. At the time of retirement, the *Maushi* or SWC may choose to give her an endowment to start another chain under her. In the other system, the *Maushi* or SWC provides space for the sex worker to stay, solicit and entertain clients. She also protects the sex workers from any undue harassment by clients or raids by the police and also provide for their

treatment for illness. The sex worker herself negotiates with the clients, collects the fees and gives a commission (share) to the *Maushi* or SWC.

As is the common practice across brothels of Bihar, there are no fixed rules and the nature of contract depends upon the interpersonal relationship between the sex worker and the contractor (*Maushi*). Contracts are invariably drawn up verbally after negotiations.

Sex work contractors mostly being women with little literacy require a male pimp (or guard) who can negotiate for them, network with the police officials and deal with other similar issues. The *Maushi* and her pimp assistant sometimes indulge in intimacy and develop emotional attachment. In a few cases they have even married and established a family. Thus they try to make a virtue out of their socio-economic constraints, in the process fulfilling their personal, social, security and emotional needs.

However, the real dilemma strikes once they have a child of their own. On the one hand they have the ambition to give their children a better socially-integrated life that they themselves aspired for but could not achieve and on the other hand they try to keep their children away from sex trade while still sustaining their livelihood through the only profession they have ever known.

The society tends to ostracize both the *Maushi* and her pimp husband forever, for adopting an unacceptable social behaviour, making mainstreaming very difficult for them. This further confines them to the comfort zone they have within their own family circle formed within the brothel. It has been observed in Kishanganj brothel areas that while they allow their girl children to return to sex trade, they keep daughters-in-law away from the trade and protect her. They believe that in this manner she will help them carry their family forward shielded from the ills of sex trade. If she has a male child, he grows up to become the protector and adopts the role of the guard at the brothel. In these complex arrangements, a guard (male pimp) can therefore be a husband, a son or a brother of a sex worker or the *Maushi*. Those interviewed could not recall since when this practice has been around.

It is primarily the *Maushis* who are at the centre of such relationships, They are known to marry their siblings with similar families from neighbouring brothels. As a result a new social structure has developed between all the nearby brothels that together foster a closed-community bond. This informal association also works as a collective asset at the time of social or economic crisis. This phenomenon can also be reflected upon with the help of Maslow's need hierarchy, whereby the new social structure helps fulfil physiological, safety and social needs of its members.

Their Future Aspirations

The study also attempted to assess how the survivors viewed their future.

Shayrabano is one of the victims of trafficking and now lives in Samesar red-light area of Kishanganj district in Bihar. She was asked, if she would quit prostitution provided she gets another job option? Shayrabano's counter-question was, 'What will be my salary? My monthly expense is approximately Rs. 5000. I like the monetary benefit and the luxurious lifestyle it offers. I want to remain a prostitute. It is the easiest way of making money'.

When asked whether they would like to continue in the same 'trade', 60% of the victims reflected Shayrabano's sentiment and answered in the affirmative, while the remaining 40% did not respond. Their reasons for choosing to continue as a prostitute included

- social stigma;
- no education;
- no other place to stay;
- no other marketable skill;
- family members dependent on their income; and
- no status in society.

Profile of Clients of Commercial Sex Workers

To get an idea about the kind of men who visit brothels, victims were asked about the occupation of their clients. Their responses show that the clientele consists of men from different walks of life. The largest number of clients in the region belonged to the labour class. Truckers followed by businessmen and students were the other professions that clients in these brothels pursued. Police officials, doctors, politicians and criminals also figured amongst the clients who frequented these sex workers.

Overcoming Initial Challenges and Running the Programme

Past Disappointments and Low Morale

One of the greatest challenges that Nomi Network had to overcome was the women's disappointment with previous programs that could not lead up to sustainable job opportunities. As a result, these women had no motivation to participate in other programs like Nomi Network's Train the Trainer Program. Nomi addressed this issue by

- 1) setting up machines in order to showcase the next phase of our program to the women and committing to working with them for a longer duration than what they had previously experienced,

- 2) spending time on a personal level and building deeper friendships with them to gain a better understanding of who the women outside of the classroom were, and
- 3) exhibiting that it is a community activity (not just a job) where the women can grow together (solidarity and unity) towards success.

Training Programme and Outcome

All women and girls recruited for the programme received 11 months of training that covered sewing (of fabric bags) skills, entrepreneurship and leadership. The programme consists of three months of basic skill-building, four months of intermediate level learning and four months of advanced training. During this period, they are equipped with knowledge and skills in order to work in any manufacturing or production setup. Due to the lack of employment opportunities outside, Nomi Network is presently employing them to make pouches for its own retail outlets.

Since August 2012, Nomi Network has trained 46 women and young girls living in and around the red-light area in sewing fabric bags. Average income of each woman (March 2013 onwards) has been Rs 2400/- per month, which includes base pay, onetime bonus and learning bonus.

Monthly emoluments of women and young girls sewing fabric bags for Nomi Network

- Base pay: Rs. 1010
- Monthly on-time bonus: Rs. 190
(awarded to women who come on time, participate in all activities and leave office after completing all work that is assigned for the day)
- Learning bonus: Rs. 100
(awarded to women who come before time, participate in learning sessions and learn English alphabets, words, sentences, etc.)
- Productivity pay: Rs. 5 for each pouch (medium sized)

After the successful completion of training for the first group, demand emanated from both the brothel areas and vulnerable communities to start new training programs for them. Nomi Network responded by initiating more training programmes.

Table 1: Training programmes initiated by Nomi Network, since August 2012

| Groups | Members | Stage of training | Remarks |
|---|---|--|--|
| Pilot Project Group | 18 | | |
| | In production (fabric bag/pouch making) | 50% trainees from Rampur red-light area; 50% from the slum area of Forbesganj; 90% trainees equipped with advance knowledge of conducting Quality Control. | |
| Khabaspur Training Group (red-light area community) | 6 | Completed basic training and started intermediate technical training with sewing machine | All the women and girls in this training are from Khabaspur (15 kilometres away from Forbesganj) red light community |
| Painting Group for Adolescent Girls | 11 | Completed basic training and started intermediate training in painting | All the adolescent girls are from the community living around the Rampur red light area and are highly vulnerable |
| Rampur Training Group | 11 | Started basic training in sewing | A mix of red light community women and SC community living on government land at Kali Mela Road, Forbesganj |

Picture 1-2: Nomi Network Production Centre, Forbesganj, Araria District, Bihar



The Recruitment and Training Process followed by Nomi Network

- Mobilization and initiation
 - Co-opt women trainees, their family members and pimps
 - Selection of women and young girls for the programme
 - The training programme begins with life skill training
 - Setup the rules and regulations of the training program
- Build a conducive eco-system for trainees
 - Organize visits to the home of the trainees
 - Provide legal support to the women and girls
 - Express solidarity with the women and girls to say no to domestic violence and sexual exploitation
 - Create groups with a mix of women from red light areas and other vulnerable communities
- Training content
 - Create synergy in the group with different innovative games
 - Begin with basic training for hand stitching of fabric bags and other products
 - Ensure that every woman and girl follows the rules of the training program
 - Encourage women during the training program
- Guidance, encouragement and empowerment
 - Keep visiting their living quarters
 - Help women in need and encourage other women to come forward to help their co-workers in need
 - Peg the monetary expectation at a realistic and sustainable level
 - Finalize stipend for the trainees
 - Help trainees with the opening of their own bank accounts
- Manage earnings and become financially prudent
 - Encourage them to deposit 50% of stipend money in their individual bank account
 - Show them reason in saving so that in need they can withdraw from the bank instead of taking a loan from the local money lenders at very high rates of interest
 - Give them an understanding of economic self-reliance

Results and Reflections

Once the trafficked girls enter sex trade and get into a brothel, all routes to exit this life and livelihood are almost closed. This aspect was not very well documented in previous studies on sex workers and their livelihoods. This study conducted by Nomi Network identified several factors that create this one-way ticket for the victims.

- The most significant one being social ostracizing. The existing social norms and practices in India are such that they cannot go back and reunite with their families even if they want to.
- Avenues for rehabilitation are also limited. There is no well established mechanism for those in flesh trade to return to normal social life.
- There are very few regular shelter homes where prostitutes can go for a short stay to learn vocational skills.
- Even if the sex workers are able to learn a new means of livelihood, getting hired in a meaningful job that can provide them sustainable livelihood remains a challenge.

For all practical purposes, commercial sex workers lose even food security, once they leave their brothel. The guarantee of food, clothes and shelter that the Maushi or SWC provides to the sex workers within the brothel still acts as a significant pull factor. An emotional bond seems to exist between the Maushi and her sex workers, primarily because the Maushi appears to be more human than the clients they solicit or the family that abandoned them.

By providing better access to skills, knowledge and information, Nomi Network helped these women and girls to come out from the vicious cycle of trafficking, poverty and vulnerability. So far, 46 women and girls have participated in the training programme run by Nomi.

The training helped the women and girls to learn the basic skill of stitching. Fulfilling the promise of providing these women alternate jobs at their doorsteps, all of them are presently employed at the production centre run by Nomi. The women also get to work in an environment where they have respect for each other.

Nomi was able to quickly establish a good rapport as well as build a trust level with these women. When the community and family members did pressurize them to leave the work at the production centre, they refused. Instead of leaving work they wanted to leave their abusive and drunkard husbands or the pimps who were forcing them to re-enter sex trade.

Nomi network has also been successful in creating an emotional bond between these women. In some of the cases of domestic violence and sexual exploitation all the 46 women and girls stood united and protected the victim from further exploitation.

Equipped with skills and knowledge these women and girls can organize themselves into a community and access government run social security schemes and services like insurance, healthcare, and crèche for their children.

These women gained in terms of greater self-confidence, alternate skill, earnings outside flesh trade and improved savings. At the centre, Nomi is also imparting reading and writing skills. Even their community members and neighbours, who criticized them earlier, started noticing their improvement.

Nomi Network is still working in Forbesganj and trying to reintegrate the commercial sex workers with the larger community in general by involving them in the production, during their home visits, participating in their festivals, etc. Through this ongoing programme Nomi is hoping to create a model project at Forbesganj, so that the learning can be replicated in other red-light districts of India or elsewhere.

Nomi Network and their Work

Nomi, pronounced as 'know me', was formed in 2009 by two young women from New York City. Since then Nomi has been working to provide alternate livelihoods to the women and girls in trafficking or at risk of trafficking. Nomi Network is a winner of the One to Watch Ethical Fashion Forum 2012 Source Award and Great Nonprofits Top-Rated List for 2012. It is a non-profit organization that strengthens social enterprises by providing job opportunities for survivors and women at risk of human trafficking.

Presently Nomi is working in Cambodia and India. The survivors whom Nomi is able to rehabilitate create eco-friendly handbags and accessories as an alternate livelihood. Nomi Network aims to economically empower these women by

- 1) providing targeted technical, entrepreneurship and leadership skill training,
- 2) designing and developing quality, market-ready products and
- 3) linking products made by survivors and women at risk of human trafficking to the global marketplace to help build sustainable global supply chains.

The entire profit from product sales is invested back into training and education opportunities for the women that Nomi Network serves.