



SWaCH#

A higher level of self-reliance

Newsletter

SWaCH: Five Years And Counting...

Human activity generates waste that must be collected, handled and processed in a responsible manner so as to avoid nuisance to other people and to the environment. All residents must get a basic level of regular and affordable waste collection services through a system that is directly accountable to them. In addition, the material resources in waste must be recovered to prevent wastage. In most Indian cities, this recovery is laboriously carried out by waste pickers – and until fairly recently, they received no respect or recognition for their work.

The establishment of SWaCH Coop, a wholly-owned cooperative of waste pickers in 2008, was an important milestone for waste pickers. Conceived as an autonomous social enterprise, SWaCH Seva Sahakari Sanstha Maryadit, as it is formally known, provides front-end waste management services to Pune City, with support from the PMC.

The SWaCH-PMC model of waste collection is a Pro-poor Public Private Partnership. It recognises that all residents, rich and poor, have rights to the city that they live in and are also obliged to care for it. All members of SWaCH, of whom 78% are women, are working members. The cooperative is overseen by a governing board that has 14 waste picker members and 2 representatives each of the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) which is the trade union of waste pickers and the parent organisation of SWaCH.

Why SWaCH is important

SWaCH is important...

- to residents because they get reliable services at reasonable cost and with accountability.
- to waste pickers because they can earn a living with dignity -- they do not have to get into filthy garbage bins.



- to the municipality because the waste is collected and segregated at such nominal costs.
- to the villagers around Uruli because it reduces some of Pune's garbage which is dumped in their fields!

But most importantly, SWaCH is an inclusive model that recognises the contribution of the invisible workers who keep the city clean. It is also a 'green' model of waste collection -- demonstrably resource-efficient (actually *creating resources* through composting and recycling) and not heavily dependent on fossil fuel or electricity.

And yet, there are people who are not happy with SWaCH. Those who profit from selling their magic wand technologies (which rarely live up to the promises made before the crores were spent), those who would make money selling vehicles and in large contracts, do not want SWaCH around. The SWaCH system is too transparent and too simple! And we all know that the more complex the system, the more the money that stands to be made.

Why does SWaCH insist on user fees?

SWaCH waste collectors are not paid by the PMC for door to door collection. The service is supported by user fees paid by citizens. All citizens have to pay for the service. The user fee facilitates a direct accountable relationship between the service user and the service provider. User fees in Pune are less than half those in other small Indian cities -- Kottayam in Kerala at Rs. 100 per household per month is the highest, followed by Patna in Bihar at Rs. 60 and Patiala in Punjab at Rs. 50.

The SWaCH model

The SWaCH waste collection model is user fee-based, usually Rs.10 to 30 per household per month depending upon certain variables; in slums, it is Rs.15 per household per month. Waste picker members pay 5% of their earnings from user fees towards supporting the cost of staff, logistics and other overheads. It is this resilient informal sector which has truly made the model sustainable, despite non-compliance by the PMC with respect to timely provision of resources.

Usually, two workers collect source-segregated waste from 200-300 households, offices, shops and other establishments using manual push carts (or small motorized vehicles in difficult terrain). The waste pickers have rights over recyclables and retain income from the sale of scrap. This ensures maximum recycling and retrieval. Waste pickers separate the waste into wet and dry. Wet/organic waste is handed over to the PMC system. In some cases it is composted on site. Dry waste is

sorted into categories (plastic/paper/metal/glass/leather/etc.) and then further fine sorted. Whatever has a market, is sold.

SWaCH operates a helpline which enables service users to give feedback/ and to register complaints. This further facilitates accountability to the service users.

How SWaCH emerged

Waste pickers in Pune scripted their exit out of the rubbish heaps and landfills to transform their lives when they claimed a space for themselves in municipal solid waste management.

The journey commenced in 1993 when they organised into the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat. KKKPKP argued that waste pickers were workers because they recovered materials for recycling, reduced municipal solid waste handling costs, generated employment downstream and contributed to public health and the environment. We now know that waste pickers occupy an important place in the waste management and recycling value chain and contribute substantially to the manufacturing economy.

SWaCH Coop was not an experiment that was unleashed on unsuspecting citizens -- it was preceded by a systematic two-year pilot project (2005-2007) that carefully established the workability of this model. In 2008, SWaCH entered into an MoU with the Pune corporation, to collect waste door to door.

In the crucial early years, PMC played a positive and enabling role in promoting the SWaCH model. It was recognised that it was cost-saving, sustainable and environmentally beneficial. It also had the potential for gradually bringing informal workers into the formal sector while upgrading livelihoods. PMC officials understood the truly collaborative nature of the SWaCH model and took the initiative to extend their full cooperation when required.



Responsibilities of the PMC and SWaCH as stated in the MoU

The PMC is responsible for :

- **Provision of collection equipment and safety gear** to waste pickers as per the specified ratio.
- Maintenance of the office, infrastructure and resource recovery centres (**sorting centres**).
- Annually reducing **operational grant** to cover management and operational costs.
- Provision of worker **welfare benefits**.
- **Partial subsidy** of costs of waste collection from slums.



SWaCH is responsible for :

- Door to door collection of **source segregated** domestic waste.
- Maintenance of **separate streams** of waste (dry/wet/etc.)
- Collection of garden waste, construction and demolition waste, e-waste on **payment of additional user fees**.
- Collection of **road sweepings and biomedical waste excluded**.
- Direct collection of **user fees**.
- Operating and maintaining the complaint and customer care **helpline**.

Annually, SWaCH members divert an average of 35,000 tonnes of waste from Uruli landfill into recycling. This saves PMC approximately Rs 5 crores in waste handling costs, Rs 1 crore in tipping fees at the Rochem processing plant and a significant amount in emissions reduction.

MOU compliance

The 5-year MOU signed between PMC and SWaCH clearly set out the responsibilities of the PMC and SWaCH and the terms upon which the two parties would interact with each other during this period. SWaCH has always been clear that it is not a contracted party -- rather, *PMC and SWaCH are equal partners in this endeavour of improving solid waste management in the city*. Hence, it would not be overstating the case to say that SWaCH feels somewhat let down by the PMC's non-fulfilment of many of the responsibilities it had agreed to.

For example, the operational grant to be provided by PMC to SWaCH as per the MOU **was Rs 4.15 per household** per month over a period of 5 years. Instead, the **PMC spent only Rs 2.10 per household**. Similarly with **equipment**. The PMC gave **less than a fourth of the total equipment due to SWaCH** as per the MOU, in the five-year period.

Listen to the experiences of SWaCH members:

Shoba Kamble says: *"If PMC has given us safety equipment as per the MoU, we all should have got 1 soap per fortnight. I have got barely 15 soaps in the past 5 years!"*

Adds Shoba Bansode: *"I have spent most of the past 3 years sitting in the PMC main building following up on our demand for buckets for collection. It took 28 days of my time to move a file from one table to the next! After which they sanctioned 1300 buckets for 2400 people! Are we supposed to use half*

a bucket each? How are we expected to work properly without equipment?"

Shabana Diler testifies to the sense of responsibility with which waste pickers viewed their work: *"It was in the year 2009-10... We had still not received the promised raincoats from the Pune Municipal Corporation even after repeated reminders... The rains came but not the raincoats! It was raining heavily and continuously for almost a week but even in that heavy downpour, the only SWaCH members who were absent were those who had fallen ill... Our absentee rate even during those days never went beyond 10%."*

Waste pickers require safe, weatherproof places to sort out the waste that they collect. Provision of sorting sheds was included in the MoU – there was to be one in every kothi – but only around 10% of the requirement for sorting sheds was met. The non-provision of storage infrastructure increased transport cost for waste pickers, impacted their health and led to lower value for scrap since they could not store/accumulate it. Corporators still proudly proclaim that they will not allow a single sorting shed in their ward!

Meena Shelke, a waste picker from Kondhwa ward describes her disheartening experience: *"The PMC was supposed to give us sorting sheds in each ward -- they didn't! So I spent a lot of time convincing the citizens in my area that I needed this to ensure maximum recovery of recyclables. They constructed a sorting shed in their society for us. And then the PMC officials went and set fire to almost Rs. 2000 worth of my scrap material."*

Welfare benefits were promised but not paid. For poor people, this can literally be a choice between life and death.

User fees were not revised by the PMC – although in some pockets, citizens have revised the rates up to Rs 30/- per month per household in view of the rising cost of living. User fees for doorstep collection of waste in Pune compared to other cities contradict some claims that the SWaCH model overcharges citizens:

Name of city	Population in lakhs 2011	Official monthly user fee collection permitted
Bhopal	18	30
Bhuvaneshwar	8.3s	20
Coimbatore	10.6	30
Gandhinagar	2.08	25
Guwahati	9.6	50
Kottayam		100
Kozhikode	4.3	30
Lucknow	28.1	40
Mangalore	4.8	30
Motihari	1.2	60
Patiala	4.2	50
Patna	16.8	60
Pune	31.1	10
Shimla	1.6	35



Another area of non-compliance by the PMC contradicts some of its own programmes of better public health and sanitation for the poor. PMC was to **subsidise waste collection in slums** by paying Rs 5 per hh/mth to SWaCH for offering this service in slum pockets. In the 5 years of the MoU, PMC has made no payments towards this.

Tulsa Khavle collects waste in a slum. She says that not only has she not got the Rs 5 per household from the PMC, she has *"had many problems collecting waste. Not only do the citizens not segregate waste, they actually mix the waste from 4-5 houses together. They live separately, cook separately, eat separately and sleep separately but when it comes to paying for garbage collection, they are united as one family and claim they will only pay for one household!"*

Gangaram echoes Tulsa's sentiment that without subsidy, it is not remunerative for the waste picker to service the slum dwellers: *"The problem is that even if citizens in the slum pay us, there is no recyclable waste. Every scrap of paper is thrown into the stove for heating water... Every milk bag is washed and sold -- so unless PMC pays us the subsidy, we earn very less and don't manage to make ends meet by working here."*

SWaCH contribution to the city

Recently, over 50,000 citizens' signatures were collected on a petition asking the PMC to renew its MoU with SWaCH and to clear dues. Despite the issues faced by SWaCH in negotiating complex relationships of accountability with respect to citizens, PMC, corporators and the waste picker members, it is undeniable that the PMC-SWaCH arrangement benefits waste pickers and created a space for them, a legitimate space in which informal workers could upgrade their livelihoods and explore further options. For one thing, it gave the children of SWaCH members the opportunity to continue their education and dream dreams, as also to be able to recognise and acknowledge their parents as service providers.

Sunita Kale beams as she says: *"Thanks to SWaCH, my children don't work at a brick kiln or collect waste, but all go to school. We are all comfortably off. We work hard but feel confident of securing our children's future. Baba Adhav may not know me, but not a day goes by when I don't thank him for what he has done for all of us."*

For Suman More, what is *"most important is the recognition and respect of other people. This kind of respect cannot be quantified in monetary terms. I have come a long way from the time someone threatened to call the police if they saw me in their galli ever again."*

Creating new avenues

The SWaCH cooperative has also had to innovate, both to sustain its operations and to create newer sustainable livelihood options for more waste pickers. The innovative initiatives yielded a range of financial, social, environmental and other benefits that had very little or almost no financial implications for PMC, but in fact yielded benefits all round – for waste pickers, citizens, the city and the PMC. Some of the innovative schemes are:

- **V-Collect Clothes programmes:** This initiative to recycle old clothes collected from citizens benefits those who cannot afford to buy good clothes at market prices. It encourages recycling and minimises waste. Over 50 metric tonnes of old clothes donated by over 10,000 households of Pune, have been recycled and sold to over 5000 urban poor families at nominal rates.
- **Nirmalya Project:** Over the past 5 years, by diverting huge amounts of waste (both organic and non-biodegradable) from Pune's rivers during Ganapati Visarjan (97 tonnes in 2013 alone), SWaCH members reduced the pollution of rivers and the dumping of nirmalya on the ghats. The organic waste is composted. This has encouraged many citizens to be more eco-conscious.
- **Production and sale of disposal bags and labels for Sanitary Towels and diapers:** This encourages responsible behaviour in citizens, benefits waste pickers, leads to a cleaner environment. Around 3 lakh bags were purchased in 2013 by conscientious citizens.
- **E-waste collection:** In keeping with the government's own rules, SWaCH ensures the correct disposal of e-waste, benefitting the environment, the corporation and citizens. Over 7 metric tonnes of E-waste were diverted from the grey market and sold in the past year.



SWaCH – the current Position

At the end of 5 years, SWaCH reaches out to 4 lakh households through 2300 waste picker members, diverting over 600 tonnes of waste from the landfill where they would increase Greenhouse Gas emissions and exacerbate climate change.

The net actual cost for this to the PMC has been Rs 2.10 per household per month, lower than any other primary collection waste model across the world. The strength of this lies in the ability of SWaCH to recover an average of Rs 20 per month per household directly, an amount which, conservatively speaking, is ten times what PMC pays SWaCH.

Despite initial support to SWaCH, PMC's support has been dwindling over the years and is now almost negligible. In other words, it is **SWaCH waste pickers and the paying citizens who have kept the waste collection model going.**

Our primary allegiance is to the paying citizens we are servicing. SWaCH staff will continue to service SWaCH member issues and support with administrative, financial, logistic and citizen interface support.

SWaCH staff will be available for redressing direct citizen issues with regard to:

- Purchase of ST bags and diaper labels
- Purchase of composters
- New contracts and other initiatives
- All complaints about existing work
- Billing, invoicing, administrative issues, financial compliance with institutions.

Subject to renewal of the MoU, PMC will coordinate for secondary collection of waste directly with waste pickers. Delays in secondary collection system by PMC, failure to collect from feeder points, instructions to delay collection from certain pockets due to non-lifting of waste etc. would all be communicated directly to the waste pickers .

SWaCH will strongly protest any injustice or threat to the work of the waste pickers on the ground. SWaCH work on the ground will continue with the 2300 waste picker members providing their daily waste collection service. Founder member Saru Waghmare is clear on what she expects from the PMC: *"We would tell corporators that what we need from you is to understand the model, tell citizens to pay the user fee and segregate waste, compost it in their own premises. That way the overall garbage problem would be addressed!"*

SWaCH demands of PMC

- Clear the dues towards SWaCH for the period following February 2013, at the earliest.
- Provide the pending equipment as per schedules shared.
- Pay towards the maintenance cost of the equipment that has been incurred directly by waste pickers.
- Pay towards the welfare benefits budgeted for but not covered by PMC as per MOU @ 700 per waste picker per year for 5 years towards 2300 waste pickers
- Provide the subsidy of Rs 5 per household per month for collection of waste from slums as per the MOU.

Suman More describes how sometimes, an effort would be made to sow discord in the cooperative by people who were unaware of the transparency within the cooperative: *"The corporator would tell us, 'They (SWaCH staff) are taking all the money and not giving it to you. How much have you been paid?' We would show them the MOU and explain that we were not meant to be paid by SWaCH but by citizens directly;*

so, if they stopped objecting to citizens paying us directly that would help us! Also, we knew what salaries the supervisors and coordinators were earning, many of them are our own children! So, we did understand there is a cost to that management! Once, a corporator asked the CEO 'You must be making a lot of money! What is your salary?' She said she earned Rs 25000 per month. He turned around and asked his PA how much he earned --the PA whispered '35000...!'

The potential of the SWaCH model

Waste pickers in Pune have travelled the long distance from being 'nuisance creators' to valued waste managers. They accord respect and receive it in equal measure. SWaCH members and their families have better work conditions, regular hours of work and an improved livelihood. Educational and job opportunities have opened up -- 3626 children of SWaCH members are studying in schools and colleges and 33 children / family of members were staff of SWaCH.

In terms of market innovations, SWaCH has helped to create a market for recycling, even amongst higher income groups, by tagging this as the response of a modern, 'eco-conscious' consumer.

At a time when 'mitigating climate change' and 'maximising sustainability' are key phrases in assessing any project, the innate sustainability of the SWaCH model needs to be emphasised and projected. The model is not energy-intensive and has a low carbon footprint. Only non-recyclables are sent to the landfill. It is user fee-based and reliant on the 'polluter pays' principle.



SWaCH also envisions processing units for organic wastes that are compliant with environmental regulations, both composting and bio-gas plants, and the production of post-consumer, pre-recycling goods – for example woven plastic bags; plastic substitute paper packaging and paver blocks made of construction debris; the establishment of eco-friendly reprocessing units for goods like paper and plastic;

the setting up of 'Cash for Trash' centres for trade in reusable and repairable goods and recyclables... There is no doubt that the SWaCH model has worked. It could have worked better if the PMC had taken a more direct position of adhering to the MOU and the model set out in the city development plan. For example:

- PMC allocates space for parking and cycling and hawking and gardens. It could have done the same for sorting sheds and constructed them aesthetically in consultation with PMC corporators. The administration needs to play a role in allaying the fears of municipal councillors.
- Corporators have started parallel waste collection systems in their own wards, usually without user fees

or segregation, leading to a conflict of interest between SWaCH members and residents. Corporators have used their ward budgets to purchase tempos for waste collection at no cost to the service user. The recurring cost which is very high comes out of the municipal kitty.

- Corporators have tried to appease their constituency by agreeing to non-payment of user fee.
- Servicing of slum and low income households was to be subsidized by the PMC. However, the municipal administration has been reluctant to pay these subsidies, fearing this will lead to other dynamics.
- Inefficient secondary collection in areas where collection fees have not been paid has an impact on the image of SWaCH. Residents who do pay fume over overflowing community bins and feel cheated that the streets are not clean despite paying for the service.



Ranjit Gadgil of the environment group Parisar locates SWaCH's efforts within the need to re-think the entire waste collection and disposal model and focus on holistic solutions rather than piecemeal ones:

“Centralized models, with heavy reliance on large processing plants such as Hanjer or a landfill, are not only costly but rarely operate as expected. They lead to a single point of failure, with city-wide consequences. On the other hand, a decentralized model is extremely robust, and the failure of a single site only has a small localized effect. A city which pushes for at least 1 organic composting unit (using whichever technology is appropriate, be it composting, bio-methanation, vermi-composting...) in each ward would lower transport costs substantially. The household segregation of waste will allow for greater recycling, recovery and re-use, which we agree are environmentally essential. Unfortunately, the current focus of municipalities is on technology and not on decentralised management systems that involve people, create a sense of responsibility about the waste we generate or promote low-cost localized solutions allowing for greater monitoring and evaluation by local communities.

The SWaCH model represents one part of such a decentralized model. But it can only succeed if the city adopts the overall model and plays its part in ensuring the rest of the pieces are put in place. We hope that the new Commissioner, driven by the current crisis, will think of long-term solutions, rather than falling prey to some quick fix.’



Pune's Citizens on SWaCH...



'Waste pickers and waste recyclers generated their own means of employment by collecting and selling paper, metal and glass. This was more convenient and gave them more independence than beg-

ging for work from the government. Dalit women and those who had fled from the drought-affected areas took to this form of employment. They organized themselves too. As the middle class grew with the country's economic progress, the quantity of waste also increased. Handling this increased quantity of garbage became a massive problem for the PMC. There was no space for either dumping waste or for placing containers. KKP KP offered PMC a way out of this problem: Citizens should segregate waste into wet and dry in the home, and the waste collector would pick it up from the doorstep, recover the recyclables and deliver the rest to the PMC's trucks. KKP KP launched SWaCH and PMC signed a 5 year MoU. SWaCH was expected to be self-sufficient in 5 years' time.

However, there was one feature of the MoU – administrative costs - which was crucial. The city was large and the number of waste collectors was also considerable. It ought to have been the PMC's responsibility to oversee the waste collection work. But they passed on this responsibility to SWaCH with the promise of paying administrative costs.

From the good work that SWaCH did – composting, biogas, fair trade scrap shop - money was put into scholarships for waste pickers' children. Campaigns were taken up at the vasti level – for example, child marriages were stopped. Savings groups have been set up. The cooperative scrap shop was set up.

SNDT played a crucial role in bringing the concerns and issues related to waste pickers to the attention of government officials. It helped to resolve housing issues, find place for sorting sheds, sort out family disputes and even launch a business.

This movement has caught people's attention. They have formed a relationship, now, with waste pickers. Citizens have begun to pay the user fees and waste pickers have begun to earn. But now, the private contractors have entered this sector in a major way and mechanization has also started.

In many ways we have succeeded – waste picker women have learned to drive tempos! But we haven't succeeded in other things – like using gloves, for example...Women have gained economic independence. This has given made them aware -- about themselves, society, economic issues, culture and politics. The insecure, unorganized workers have come a long way. The government must recognize their right to employment, their right to life! Maharashtra has 24 to 25 municipalities. The SWaCH model is ready to be duplicated and can no longer be ignored.

- **Baba Adhav, labour leader** ”

'The structure of SWaCH was something PMC people could never understand. An organisation owned and run by the waste pickers was too hard for them to fathom. Some ward officials often requested us not to bring the waste pickers for the ward or citizens' meetings. We had to explain that we were there to serve the waste pickers and they were and are the real owners of the organisation, SWaCH. They have to come for these meetings since they are the real decision makers. They were our bosses. Maybe now, when they see the waste pickers going on without the support staff, they will finally understand this unique structure and model of SWaCH.'

- **Shabana Diler, former CEO, SWaCH PMC**

'The establishment of the SWaCH cooperative was a step ahead that provided the waste sector the power to negotiate as service providers and also enhance the capacity of the waste picking community to get organized for their rights to live with dignity. The union and the cooperative have worked in tandem to sensitize the public, negotiate with the establishment and advocate for the rights of thousands of waste-pickers. They have also encouraged the aspirations of waste picking families to move out of this caste-based occupation by encouraging education initiatives and developing credit societies, negotiating for health insurance and several other initiatives. Significantly, rather than merely working in its pockets the organization has tried to develop alliances with other social movements. It has been an active constituent in networks of women's organizations, informal sector workers and child rights, indicating its broad-based and integrated perspective.'

- **Nagmani Rao, Karve Institute of Social Service, Pune**



'The KKP KP and SWaCH model of waste picker and grassroot recycler mobilisation has led to visible changes in the life and livelihood prospects of thousands of otherwise exploited and impoverished women. It has also challenged top-down, elitist urban planning processes, and industrial modes of production that ignore environmental and human considerations.'

- **Ashish Kothari, Environmentalist, Kalpavriksh**

'As a legal professional I have had to deal with numerous clients and a large diversity of issues; and much of the work is routine. But these ladies of KKP KP, and their newly-formed entity SWaCH, were different. In their talk, their discussions and attitude I found a quality that I didn't see much in my profession – a zeal to make a difference in society, for the most vulnerable populations within that society.

Our first collaboration was on the Agreement with SWaCH and the Pune Municipal Corporation for the door-to-door collection of garbage, and it worked on principles very different to the commercial contracts I was used to. Here, one party was clearly stronger, and the other had to make numerous adjustments in order to arrive at a workable agreement. It wasn't easy; and I often lost hope for a successful outcome; but the ladies of SWaCH showed me what true determination meant. A few years later, we embarked on a similar project with the PCMC; and although the agreement was successfully

signed, sadly, the challenges were too high here and SWaCH pulled out of the project. Yet, they left with their dignity and credibility intact.

What SWaCH has achieved ... is a lasting legacy... They were pioneers; they had the courage to create paths where none were thought possible.'

- Marzia Rowhani-Dalal, Advocate, High Court, Mumbai



'SWaCH to me is a noble initiative, particularly in a place like Pune, where solid waste management is grossly mismanaged by the municipal corporation. To SWaCH goes the credit of creating mass awareness amongst citizens regarding wet and dry garbage segregation, at source, that is the home. SWaCH has also been addressing issues of problems faced due to soiled sanitary napkins carelessly thrown into the bin by citizens.'

- Vinita Deshmukh, Journalist and RTI Activist

'The SWaCH model has given self respect to so many rag pickers and that I feel is something very valuable. It has helped them to come together and find solutions to many common problems including schooling and opportunities for higher education to their children.'

- Anjali Bapat, Activist

'SWaCH describes itself as 'India's first wholly-owned cooperative of self-employed waste pickers / waste collectors.' In reality though, it is far more than that. It is rather a new facet of Civil Society in its evolving role of mediator between the realms of Government and the Market. As a Civil Society Institution it combines the role of Trade Union, Cooperative and NGO while retaining the best features of all. As a commercial organisation, it was able to compete successfully against unscrupulous traders who enjoyed great latitude in business ethics from being part of the unorganised sector. And at the same time, SWaCH showed that it could be a viable and empowered partner with the Government in alternative models of service providers in essential social sectors. In the time to come, SWaCH will perhaps be counted as being in the vanguard of the development of a new paradigm for social change.'

- Denis Rodrigues



'SWaCH workers toil in hard conditions but I find them always cheerful and willing workers. There is a lot more that society can do for them in terms of higher wages and lifting at least the next generation out of the rut by giving them an opportunity for decent education.'

- Major General (Retd.) SCN Jatar, Nagrik Chetna Manch



'Good ideas are common – what's uncommon are people who'll work hard enough to bring them about. In a rapidly urbanizing world, which grapples with the problem of waste management, organizations like KKPKP and SWaCH show the way to deal with it while improving the lives of those involved in these sustainability-related activities. The professionalism and expertise the SWaCH members bring to every activity they undertake are truly inspiring. The SWaCH model while generating wealth from waste, impacts not just the lives of thousands of waste pickers and their families, but also the very fabric of the society we live in. Empowering women and marginalized sections of society through innovation imparts not just financial value but also provides social and environmental benefits to the system it is a part of. Partnering with SWaCH at the Protoprint- SWaCH Tech lab in an effort to upcycle waste plastic for use in today's cutting edge 3D printing machines has been an enriching experience.'

- Suchismita Pai, Director, Protoprint Solutions Pvt Ltd.

'eCoexist has worked with SWaCH on many waste collection and recycling projects since it was formed. The SWaCH managerial team has been committed to uplifting the working conditions livelihoods and skills of the women who are members of SWaCH. The women themselves have been willing to experiment with the ideas presented to them...We have personally interacted with these women and feel that their understanding and experience of waste can actually help the city come up with better waste management systems. Additionally the reuse and recycling of waste can be enhanced if SWaCH members are more centrally involved in the planning of how waste is collected and moved around the city.'

- Manisha Gutman, founder eCoexist



'In the true sense SWaCH has established a sound business model based on the principal of cooperation. It generates job opportunities for many, gives creative and sustainable solutions to the problem (of waste management) and is a win-win situation for all stakeholders. This perfect business model is worth studying in any business school but the crying need of the present situation is to understand its importance and support it for our own future.. '

- Vijay Wavare, CSR, Tech Mahindra Ltd



'Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat...did not restrict itself to making economic demands but also underlined the issues of health, environmental degradation and the ugliness of urbanization. The concept of SWaCH was thus born. They exemplified a practicable relationship between a Trade Union and a local self-governance body, where there is no dependence but a mutually practical solution for a felt need in the city.

They even went one step further by opening and operating a scrap shop for the waste pickers...Even today they must overcome a mountain of challenges but their confidence

is equally high, in fact even higher. Society needs to join hands with them. It is unethical to dump the waste from our backyards into Uruli's backyard. Although SWaCH and KKP KP are successfully fighting against it, we too must share their burden.'

- Sadhana Dadhich, women's rights activist

'Waste pickers make a living out of what we consider useless or unnecessary. Thus, they understand waste, and recognize its value much more than we do. Their intimate knowledge of waste, combined with professional discipline, resulted in the birth of SWaCH...We discard waste, while they "manage" it. They have thus recognized the worth of what they do, but when will we, the citizens, who are so completely dependent on their service, ever recognize it?'

- Vidya Kulkarni, photo journalist

'SWaCH is one of the few service delivery organizations which have kept their activist core intact, even as they struggle in an extremely competitive service sector. They are a true representative of 'hybrid' organizing, as feminist scholar Sonia Alvarez puts it. As a centre, we have always come back having

learnt immensely from the members. The SWaCH model while upgrading the working conditions of the workers, also strives to give them dignity and at the same time has in place a model of constant training and upgrading of knowledge.'

- Sneha Gole, University of Pune



'SWaCH partnered with Intach and did a superb job of teaching waste management to the slum dwellers in Ambil Odha, resulting in a substantial reduction of the waste being thrown into the river. Awareness of the environment, health hazards of unmanaged waste and the model of managing our waste by reducing, segregating, reusing, recycling and not by just collecting it and dumping it in landfills where it can create a huge problems were concepts understood by the SWaCH team far ahead of anyone else in the city. Further there is a dual action of empowering a marginalized community and giving the work they do the respect and recognition it demands.'

- Arti Kirloskar, Intach

SWaCH Salient Features:

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 of waste.

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 driven by women introduced in difficult terrain).

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

User fee: Recovered from all classes of users. It facilitates a direct accountable relationship between the service user and the service provider. The service provider is not an employee of the municipality.

User fee amount: Usually Rs.10 to 30 per hh pm depending upon certain variables; in slums, Rs.15 per hh pm.

Collection from slums: The PMC was to pay a subsidy of Rs.5 per household per month but it was never implemented

Rights over recyclables: Collectors have rights over recyclables and retain income from the sale of scrap. This is an incentive for them to ensure maximum materials recovery.

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: Rs.700 per worker per annum were to be provided by PMC.

Complaint and customer care helpline: Operated by SWaCH, enables service users to give feedback/ and to register complaints. It further facilitates accountability to the service users.

Performance indicators: Specified in the agreement.

Validity of MOU: Five years.

Monthly per household cost to municipality: Projected cost Rs. 4.38 per household. Actual cost Rs.2.10 per household.



SWaCH members speak

'Citizens and the police used to create problems for me during my work. They would ask me –'Who are you, do you have a photo pass?' I found out that if I joined KKKPK, I would get a photo pass. I would get a support system...I feel that I am not an orphan any more.'

- Sharda Devidas Dedhe

'Through KKKPK and SWaCH we get to be a part of various meetings and demonstrations where we learn about issues, express ourselves and be heard. I have been able to travel to various countries and have learnt about the situation of waste pickers like me in other parts of the world. I have also shared our story with people from across the world. My photograph has come in the newspaper. My interview has also come on television. My work has got a lot of value.'

- Baby Popat Mohite



'When I used to pick waste at the container, the citizens used to shoo me away from there. They would abuse me as well. I joined the organization to be able to get some decent respectable work.'

- Maina Prakash Thombre

'My confidence has gone up, so has my knowledge about issues. Now if there is a problem at my work place, I can talk to citizens and sort it out myself.'

- Pratibha Shailendra Bhosale

'I can work less and earn more! The police would also trouble us a lot, before. I was really scared of them. Now I am confident and not scared of anyone. I can go and sit in the office of any housing complex and talk to the officials.'

- Shoba Yuvraj Ovhal

'Whenever there is trouble at home, the union staff come home and sort things out. They come to the police station and talk to the police nicely. They help to take us to the hospital and provide a lot of comfort and support as well.'

- Chaya Gulab Gaiwad

'I have received training in Tempo driving. The organization also helped me get a license. That is a great opportunity for me.'

- Suvarna Bhagwan Sargade



'Thanks to KKKPK, waste pickers get together and work together. We can demand our rights. We have been fighting to get pension from the government.'

- Parvati Venkappa Pawar

'I started living with pride and honour... I don't have to give any bribes anymore.'

- Suman Vasant Kshirsagar



'I go for meetings and learn about a lot of new things. And I can share that information and knowledge with other waste pickers and citizens in my slum – that makes me feel good and important.'

- Apsara Raju Shaikh

'I am now a Ward Representative. It has also increased my knowledge a lot. I now know what to do when and why. Earlier I used to not contribute the 5% towards the cooperative. But now I know why it is to be paid so now I pay myself and tell others as well.'

- Balu Ramesh Pawar



'We had a uniform sari because of which no one could talk to us in a rude manner. We got permission to work as scrap collectors which has benefitted us a lot.'

- Vajanta Saheb Shinde



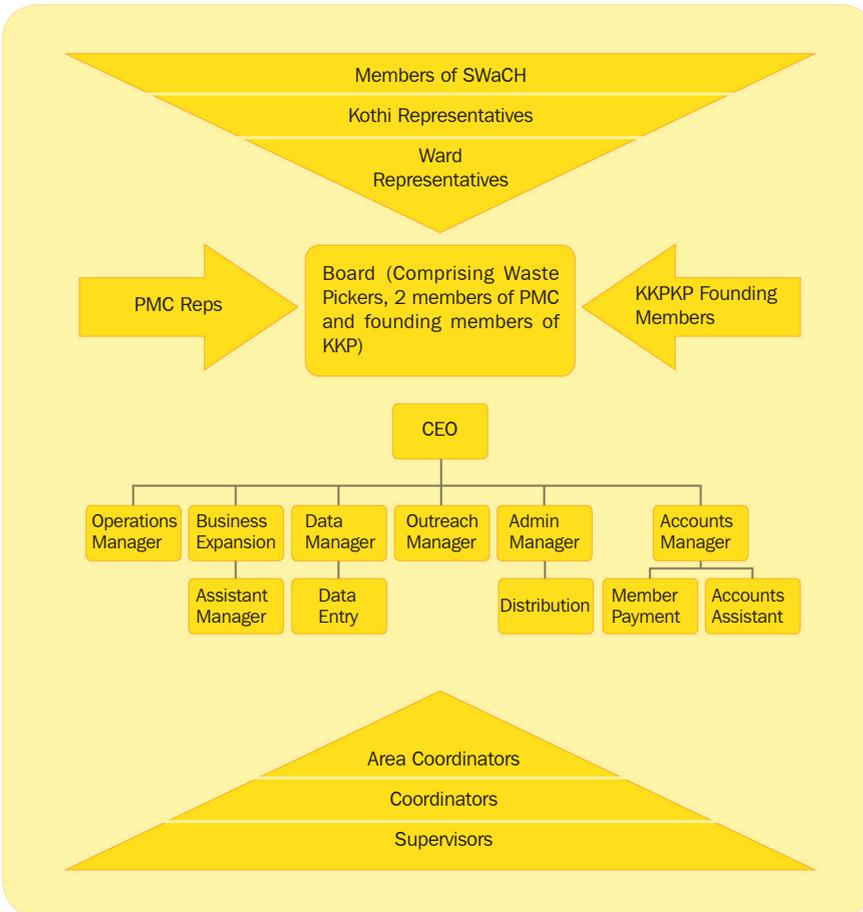
'Earlier, in order to get scrap, I would have to go out at nights and all odd hours. I had to get inside garbage containers and fight off dogs and pigs for the waste. Now I do regular work during regular hours. I earn an income which is rightfully mine.'

- Shoba Ramesh Khude



Statistics and Charts

1. SWaCH Organogram:



2. Current status of SWaCH Operations:

Scale

Operational Area:	Pune City (PMC jurisdiction)
Spread:	80 out of 143 kothis
Coverage:	400,000 out of 703,486 hhs (48%)
Slum Coverage:	28,716 /54,584 hhs in 126/553 slums

Member data

Member workers:	2,300
Members regularly paying 5% of earnings:	1,243
Daily worker absenteeism:	only 3% of total workers (Jun - Jul 12)

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)

Decentralised waste management

6-8 tonnes composted daily on site in 80 housing colonies

3. Non-Compliance

Payments:

SWaCH has been paid less than 50% of the total amount due to it as per the MOU. The per household monthly cost that PMC has incurred in this model is less than Rs 2.20, at least 10 times less than the national average.

	Year / Date	Amount Due as per MoU	Instalments as per MoU	Amount received	Date	Cheque No
Year 1	1 st September 2008	17000000	12750000	1400000	07-09-2007	
				12750000	03-10-2008	962285
Year 1	1 st March 2009		4250000	-	-	-
Year 2	1 st September 2009	16400000	6150000	-	-	-
Year 2	1 st March 2010		8200000	6150000	31-03-2010	266842
				2850000	31-03-2010	266804
Year 3	1 st September 2010	16400000	8200000	-	-	-
Year 3	1 st March 2011		8200000	333740	31-03-2011	68466
				6954420	31-03-2011	69195
Year 4	1 st September 2011	16400000	8200000	3000000	08-11-2012	417195
Year 4	1 st March 2012		8200000	3000000	05-01-2013	594549
Year 5	1 st September 2012	16400000	8200000	-	-	-
Year 5	1 st March 2013		10250000	3000000	20-05-2013	810973
		82600000	82600000	39438160.0		

Equipment:

The PMC gave less than a fourth of the total equipment due to SWaCH. Some equipment was directly distributed locally by elected representatives -- this eased the burden but made it impossible to track the balances due as these were often given directly to waste pickers without any documentation.

Equipment	As per MoU with PMC			Actually Received						Total received	Due
	Frequency	No of Units	Due in 5 yrs	08	09	10	2011	2012	2013		
Push cart	2 yrs	1100	2200		247	178		71		496	1704
Cotton Sari	1 yr	2200	11000	1500						1500	9500
Apron - 2	1 yr	2200	22000			4400			2200	6600	15400
Foot wearl - 1	1 yr	2200	11000			2196		520	2300	5016	5984
Rain coat - 1	1 yr	2200	11000				600	2082	239	2921	8079
Broom - 4	0.5 yr	12000	120000							0	120000
Soap - 12	0.5 yr	36000	360000			8000			27600	35600	324400
Picks	0.5 yr	3000	30000							0	30000

Sorting shed status:

Number of sorting sheds required	198
Number of sorting sheds provided	10

Provision of sorting sheds was included in the MoU - there was to be one in every kothi – but only around 10% of the requirement for sorting sheds was met. Health problems arising from having to work on the roadside, at the mercy of the elements, leads to a reduction in waste retrieval to the tune of Rs 50,000 per month.



Total welfare benefits owed to SWaCH by PMC:

Insurance	400 x 2300	920000
Educational incentives	300 x 2300	690000
Total per annum		1610000
Total for 5 years		8050000

In the 5 year period of the MoU, not a single welfare benefit was made available to any waste picker of SWaCH! The non-provision of this resulted in poor health, lack of faith in the PMC and enormous expenditure of valuable time by SWaCH staff in pursuing such options with municipal departments -- although the provision in the MoU explicitly stated that the amount could also be paid directly to SWaCH.



Total subsidy towards slum coverage to be given by PMC:

No of households	28000
Rate per household in INR per month	5
No of months of operation	36
Total due	5040000

PMC was to subsidise waste collection in slums by paying Rs 5 per hh/mth to SWaCH for offering this service in slum pockets. In the 5 years of the MoU, PMC has made no payments towards this, making it difficult for waste pickers or slum dwellers to have any faith in the PMC and inhibiting expansion in slum coverage as a result.



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

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