



ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

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FOREWORD

Waste pickers have over the years, through their persistence and collective strength, negotiated better working conditions for the essential work they continue to do. While doing this, they are conscious and aware of the future they want to envisage for their next generations. In a city that undergoes rapid developments with its urban landscape, the collection, segregation and management of its waste has become an ever challenging task. Citizens are usually unaware of what happens to their waste once the collector makes it disappear from their doorsteps. Waste pickers, after collecting the waste spend hours contributing their labour to ensure lesser waste goes to the landfills and also contribute to the recycling industry.

Children of waste pickers, having seen the difficult working conditions in which their families have been working, are aware of the value of formal education. Kashtakari Panchayat Trust, since its inception has believed that its work with waste pickers and their livelihoods cannot be seen in isolation and has to be a function of the different facets of the lives of waste pickers. It has been possible to strengthen the contact with waste pickers by setting up systems like the Helpdesk.

This year in particular has been an unusual one, and ends on a note of uncertainty - more so for the waste pickers. With the nationwide lockdown being announced, the economy of waste pickers have been severely affected. However, they continue to work through these jarring odds to ensure the cities are clean. It is only their courage and resilience that drives and inspires us to continue the work.

Team KP

INTRODUCTION

Kashtakari Panchayat was established in 2010 with a view towards supporting waste pickers, their families and collectives. This support is in the form of direct-benefits transfers to waste pickers' families primarily for educational and health needs, training and facilitation of access to rights and entitlements, livelihoods, services and resources and research and publications for creating critical awareness about waste pickers' issues and increasing their visibility in society. Kashtakari Panchayat can be seen as a platform, which provides opportunities for different stakeholders to engage meaningfully with each other. It is also a means of linking financial and non-financial resources for effective action, which ultimately improves the lives of everyone.

Key Focus Areas

Our focus areas in 2019-20 continue to be in keeping with our overall vision and mission. These have included:

- Enhancing waste pickers' children's access to education and bridging the gap between elementary and secondary education and trying to increase involvement in upgrading quality of education.
- Training of waste pickers, with a view towards creating awareness among them about their rights and entitlements and acquainting them with procedures to access these.
- Exploring newer and more creative avenues for enhancing waste pickers' livelihoods thereby finding ways of protecting the environment and bettering the life conditions.
- Creating visibility and awareness among citizens about waste pickers' lives through different means including, active interface, social media and publications.

Broadly, the report has been categorized into two sections, Waste pickers and environment and Waste pickers and entitlements. This is done to capture all the diverse areas of engagement of KP and also to bring in a structure.

WASTE PICKERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Making space for waste pickers in the city

Every worker needs workspace. The same holds true for waste pickers. They need material recovery facilities to sort their collection of recyclable materials in order to make them marketable. Storage and bulk sale reduce transport costs and increases their bargaining capacity with aggregators.

Pune's decentralized solid waste management model is run with stakeholders like the PMC and waste picker organizations such as SWaCH. Sorting sheds or Material recovery facilities (MRF) are a critical part of this decentralized system. This is where the waste pickers segregate inorganic waste one step before selling to scrap dealers. There are currently 100 tin and brick sorting sheds that vary in size from 80 to 300 square feet, available to waste pickers and in use across the city. Most of them have been built over the last decade. Many of them are in a state of poor upkeep. Only a handful have toilets, drinking water or washing facilities. Almost none have electricity connections. Waste pickers articulate the need for more workspaces. There is a clear demand articulated by waste pickers for increased access, upgrades and repairs of sorting spaces and infrastructure. Since 2018 KP has undertaken an initiative to repair existing and build new material recovery centres. The designs vary, sometimes accommodating one or two in a single kiosk to a small group in portable steel cabins to large brick sheds.



Figure 1: Material Recovery Facility

This year we undertook the task of building mega MRFs in Pune and relevant permissions for this have been sought and received for the same. Construction was to begin in March 2020 on the sites of Koregaon Park -Burning Ghat, Regent Plaza, Handewadi and Balewadi. However, because of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, construction will commence later in the year. New portable sheds or Pinjras have been procured for 9 wards across the city during the year and 40 existing sheds have been painted in 2019.



Figure 2: Newly painted material recovery facility

Safekeeping of our waste



Kavita Ram Pethe and her friends have come a long way. She remembers the days when there was no space to keep the waste that she sorted and it brings chills to her. “Our hard labour and time goes in sorting the waste. That’s the most valuable item we have and there were so many instances of theft that we were constantly under stress. One of my friends got a snake bite because of the way our bags were kept earlier, in dark dingy places” she said.

“Once the storage units were built, it has become easier to manage our work. We even have a small lock that we use so there is no risk of the bags being subject to theft. This allows us to keep our buckets clean and safe. More importantly, we are able to sort more waste and store it properly till we make a trip to the scrap shop.” Kavita concludes.

Moving towards a zero-waste world

Our efforts to develop and promote zero-waste models of waste collection and management were taken forward in both urban and rural areas over the year. The project was implemented in the villages of Mahalunge Ingale and Bhamboli near the MIDC and IT Hub of Chakan in Pune District. Mahalunge Ingale village with a population of approx 10000, located in Khed block of Pune district in Maharashtra state alone creates approx. 6,105 Kgs of waste everyday where Bhamboli with a population of 1000, again located in Khed block of Pune district creates 870 Kgs of waste every day.

Before the start of the project, a majority of the generated waste was dumped in a landfill and some of it is dumped on roadside, burnt, and even dumped in water bodies. The challenge of improper waste collection and its disposal was required to address and hence these two villages were selected for implementation of comprehensive solid waste management with following objectives -

- Behavior change among residents by improvement in at source segregation - Dry & wet waste
- Increased awareness among villagers relating to benefits of decentralized waste management
- Perspective change towards waste, considering it as a resource
- Reducing % of waste going into a landfill by further segregation of dry waste for recycling purpose & using wet waste for composting & bio digesters
- Awareness regarding contribution of informal waste-pickers

A baseline study showed a complete absence of a system for waste management in the villages.

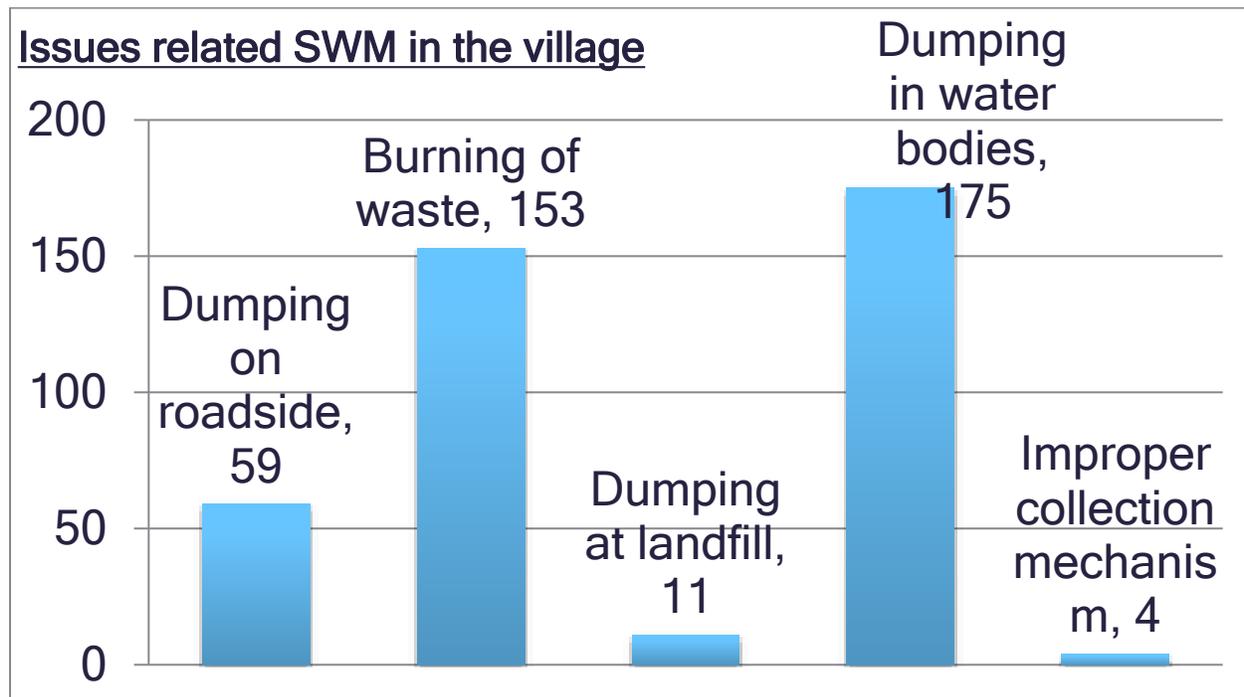


Figure 3: Status of SWM in the villages

With segregation rates at abysmal levels, the immediate need was to raise awareness about segregation and set up a secondary collection system that could handle segregated streams of waste. This required raising awareness among the residents and also tweaking existing

designs. Door to door campaigning to raise awareness as well as engaging students and residents through public programs was a strategy used. Segregation rates that were at 0% at the start of the project reached as high as 85% in certain pockets within a span of 6 months of the project



Figure 4: Training in villages



Figure 5: Preparing compost pits

Compost Pits and 11 Bio Digesters were set up to treat organic waste. The bio digesters were tied to the food security programs of the ICDS and the MDM scheme that also lead to significant savings on the use of cooking fuel for children's meals at the Anganwadis and the School.

Zero waste, Aundh

Pune Smart City Development Corporation Limited's (PSCDCL or "Smart City") vision for the Zero Waste initiative is to minimize movement of solid waste generated in Aundh- Baner Ward to landfill site. As far as practicable, waste should be processed and converted in-situ, at decentralized composting or organic waste processing unit or sent to specialized scientific disposal centers. The initiative aims to create a live-demonstration zero-waste model, which could be replicated across Pune City.

The project aims at 100% in-situ organic waste processing within Aundh Ward thereby ensuring 100% segregation at source, eliminating contamination of recyclables by organic waste, maximizing recycling of plastics, reducing landfilling and avoiding resultant greenhouse gas emissions, groundwater pollution and public health hazards.

As part of the Waste Matters project, a GIS mapping report of Aundh was conducted in the month of April and submitted to the Smart City. The demonstration model will create a blueprint for zero-waste cities based on:

- i. Elimination of organic waste in the municipal waste stream by in-situ composting;
- ii. Measurable reduction in plastic pollution through increased diversion to recycling;
- iii. Developing markets for local consumption of re-usable municipal waste;
- iv. Comprehensive management for all streams of waste from all generators of waste;
- v. Integration of waste-pickers to independently operate the model and;
- vi. Identification of polluting non-recyclable plastics and other materials to support advocacy against their production and use;

This project aims to ensure 100% in-situ composting of wet waste and maximum recycling of dry waste being generated from the entire project area covering 90,000 properties of which 9000 are slum households, and 70,000 are residential households along with 11,000 are institutional / commercial properties.

A total of 11072 premises were surveyed as part of this baseline survey to understand the nature of waste generated and methods of waste handling and management in these areas.

The summary of the findings are given below-

Type of Properties

Nature of Property	No. of Premises	No. of Properties
Non-Slum	6832	83679
Slum**	88	4368
Commercial	3066	8629
Institutional	470	470

Pockets in the project area were drawn up and geo tagged through this exercise

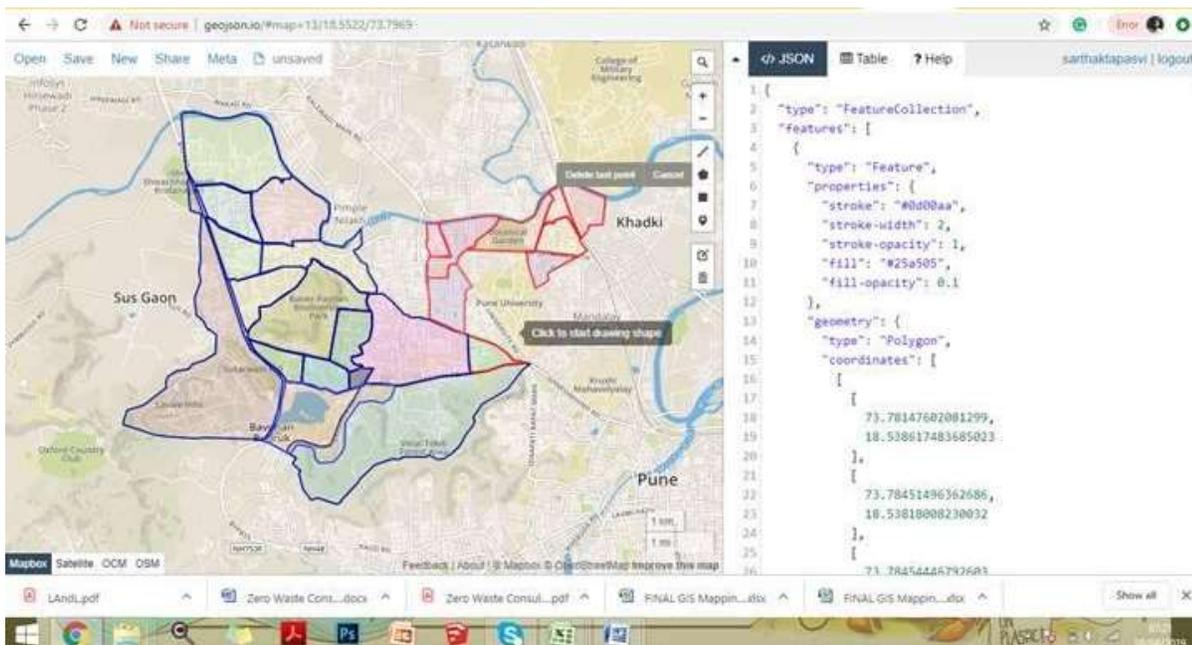


Figure 6: Geo tagged properties



Figure 7: GIS mapping of properties

In the month of April, a Workshop for Promotion and Adoption of Zero waste in Aundh was organized at YASHDA, Aundh. The participants belonged to key organizations that would play an active role in implementing the Zero Waste Project in Aundh. The participants were grouped according to Arogya kothi at the table. The workshop started with welcome and introduction of the participants at their table. Mr Avinash Mhadale from Centre for Environment Education (CEE) gave a brief introduction of the project. Ms Lakshmi Narayan from KP expressed her views on Zero Waste. She explained the mechanism for implementing a zero waste program through providing incentives / subsidies to citizens to undertake home composting and eliminating wet waste processing at source. Mr Vasant Patil and Mr Madhav Jagtap gave their valuable inputs and encouraged the PMC Divisional Sanitary Inspectors, Sanitary Inspectors, Mukadam to contribute in the Zero Waste Project. Ms Zigisah Maskar, Consultant PMC, Dr. Ketaki Ghadge, Medical Officer, participated in the workshop.

GIS Mapping data was shared with all participants of the workshop, who were split in accordance with their geographic jurisdiction. A preliminary microplanning exercise was carried out based on the available GIS data. The current collection routes, types of properties, bulk generators locations, processing units, feeder points, sorting sheds, chronic spots (illegal dumping / littering) etc. were provided to the stakeholders present In the workshop for their respective jurisdictions. Participants validated and updated the survey data presented to them.



Figure 8: Participants in the workshop

Figure 9: News article about the project



Policy Objectives Achieved:

While the project has been stalled due to uncertainty relating to the waste collection system, Kashtakari Panchayat and its affiliate entities, Swachh Pune and Swachh Plus have made significant strides in obtaining policy and financial support from government agencies towards the Project.

The PSCDCL, the smart city authority had agreed (in-principle approval) to provide the additional infrastructural support for implementation of the project. During the last one year, the project proponents have closely engaged with the PSCDCL authorities and have been able to obtain the following advocacy outputs, specific to the implementation of the Waste Matters Project:

1. The PSCDCL has formally adopted the outline and goals of the Waste-matters project as a Smart City Initiative, a project objective envisaged after implementation of a demonstrative model (end of Y1). As a part of this process, the PSCDCL has created a formal platform for involvement of the Pune Municipal Corporation, laying groundwork for potential replication across Pune.
2. The PSCDCL has deployed additional resources (USD 400,000 over 3 years) for supporting activities directly impacting the Waste Matters project. These activities include the deployment of 33 fulltime outreach animators (field staff) and implementation of a GIS based monitoring mechanism. The Swach Cooperative, in partnership with the Center for Environment Education, has been awarded a 3-year consultancy assignment for undertaking this, and will be coordinating with the project proponents for its successful implementation.
3. The Working Group, constituted by the PSCDCL, which includes representatives from Kashtakari Panchayat, CEE and SWaCH, has commenced the process for determining a government supported subsidy mechanism for in-situ composting.
4. It has adopted the vendor empanelment process (proposed under the project) for ensuring wet waste processing at source.

Collaborations

As part of the action against incineration and promoting sustainable waste management systems, in 2019-20, we also partnered with and consulted other organisations across different cities in India on setting up Zero waste systems

Thanal - Kerala:

Provided technical support for formulation of methodology, data collection and analysis to prepare a State level litter index on plastics along the National Highways. The data collection has been completed, assessment of samples are going on. Supported beach cleanup by Plastic Task Force on two beaches of Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam. The plastic waste collected from the beach were analysed the the data related to brands have been shared with GAIA and BFFP for the latest report on Brand Audit of plastic litter. Provided technical support on Climate

Action project - Carbon Neutral Kerala for data collection, compilation for creating a baseline map of carbon emissions.

Citizen Consumer Action Group - Chennai:

Provided technical support for setting up decentralized organic waste management and resource recovery in selected wards of Chennai Municipal Corporation. Provided technical training to team of CAG working on this project on composting, anaerobic digestion and zero waste systems. Provided technical help and mentoring to prepare ward level assessment reports on decentralized solid waste management programmes. Attended as a delegate of CAG in high level meeting with Commissioner of Chennai Municipal Corporation to discuss the plans for decentralization of solid waste management.

Zero Waste Himalaya:

Providing technical advice on zero waste projects with Pragya Seeds Nepal, Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee - Sikkim.

Green Army- Mentoring Green Army:

Thiruvananthapuram, an independent platform for youth and students to promote zero waste and green protocol. The programme is spread across 30 schools in Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation partnered by different NGOs and financed by TMC.

Support to Zero Waste Cities Project:

Provided technical assistance Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation for implementation of master plan for decentralized solid waste management programme. Prepared a document on decentralized and source level solid waste management practices of Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation to be shared with GAIA to prepare Zero Waste Cities Case studies

WASTEPICKERS AND ENTITLEMENTS

This section deals with the work done around various entitlements of waste pickers and their children. The Helpdesk that was established in 2018 continues to be an anchor for executing all activities related to the rights of waste pickers.

Helpdesk

- Building on its original objectives, the helpdesk gained in strength in 2019. There were concerted efforts towards creating awareness among the waste pickers about the helpdesk and to encourage them to use the helpline service as a means of redressal for issues around the themes of education, health, housing, legal issues, pension and ration. Consequently, there has been a proportionate increase in the number of cases that have been reported to the helpdesk (as is visible from the statistics provided below) as well as in the rates of case resolution.
- The first line of intervention in this system continues to be the helpdesk operator who first takes the call and takes in all the details and information about the case from the caller, if the caller requires immediate assistance in the form of letters from the office in order to get concessions on medical bills or fee reductions at school, the operator provides the documents immediately and the waste picker can start at least start the process on their part. The case is then reported to the thematic lead and helpdesk coordinator via email for further action. Emergency cases are immediately reported to the thematic lead and the helpdesk coordinator for immediate action. These could be medical emergencies, cases of corporal punishment at school, refusal to give fee reductions or legal emergencies. These are immediately brought to the attention of the concerned thematic lead and they are expected to take action as per the substantive SOPs that have been developed for each of the themes.
- Cases are tracked on a daily, weekly and monthly basis primarily by the helpdesk coordinators to get a sense of how the case is being handled and if there are ways of handling the case better and to suggest the same.

A comparative analysis of the kinds of cases that were received by the helpdesk in 2018 and then 2019 is given below. This also gives an idea of the kinds of cases that are reported on the helpdesk and which themes are the most reported.

Comparative Analysis of Cases in 2018 and 2019

Theme	2019	2018	No of case that have Increased	% of increase	Comments
DEATH	50	44	8	19.0	
DOCUMENTATION	25	0	25	NA	Categorised under other in 2018- 42 cases
EDUCATIONAL	390	151	239	158.3	
FINANCE	150	73	77	105.5	
HEALTH	728	420	308	73.3	
HOUSING	18	15	3	20.0	No significant change
LEGAL	154	131	23	17.6	With violence cases, the change in 55% increase
OTHER	40	148	-108	-73.0	Significant drop- 42 are related to documentation. Some linked to Ration documents
PENSION	91	176	-85	-48.3	
RATION	106	0	106	100.0	New theme
VIOLENCE	49	0	49	NA	
WORK	211	152	59	38.8	
	2012	1310	704	53.8	

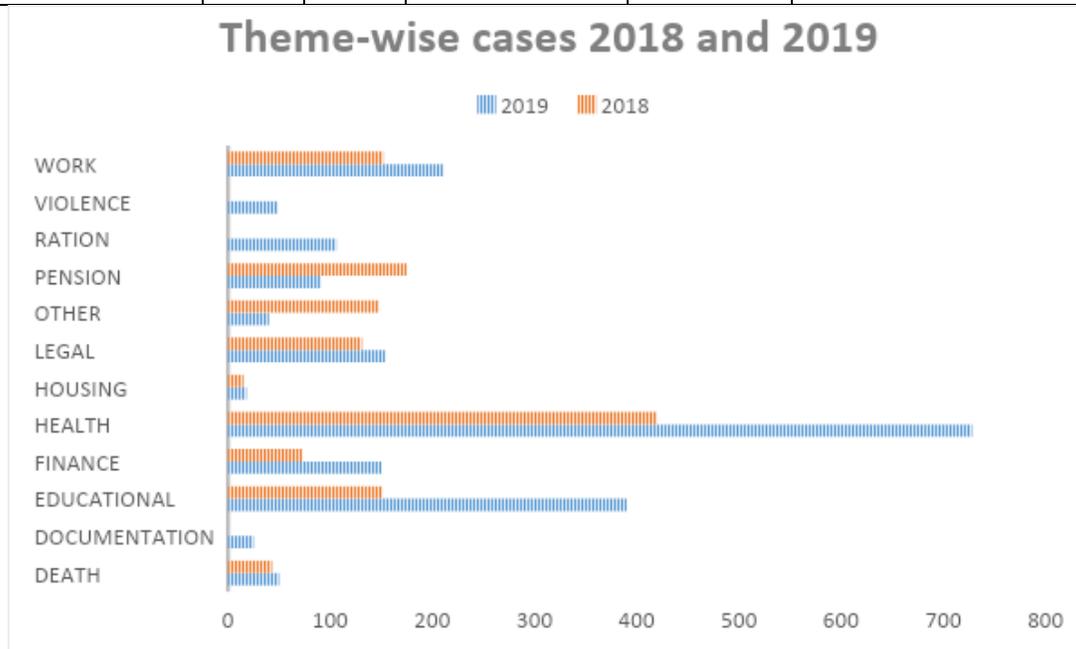


Figure 4: Thematic overview

As illustrated in the above figures, broadly speaking the themes continue to be the same as 2018, except for the theme of ration, which was a felt need and was therefore a new addition to the existing thematic intervention.

A description of all the themes is given below-

a. Death (for the PMJJBY LIC insurance):

In case of death of a waste picker, the date of death along with the cause of death gets recorded

b. Education:

Cases concerning access to education of waste picker's children and grandchildren along with issues regarding accessing scholarships, or entitlements like the reservation of 25% seats under the Right to Education Act or need for support for vocational education or training.

c. Finance:

Waste pickers frequently require loans for consumption or business. Each request for a loan is treated as a case and documented at the helpline. The idea is to create one phone number as the contact point for members, so that they do not need to remember more numbers or get confused about whom to call for what. The helpdesk phone number at present also serves as the information center for member's savings, their pending loans or any such enquiries that the members might have.

d. Health:

The maximum number of cases which come to the helpdesk continue to come around the question of health; asking help to access mostly tertiary and some secondary health care treatments for free or minimum rates. A few cases also come around access to medicines, especially in cases where the cost to medicines is a recurring one.

e. Housing:

This year we have primarily focused on ensuring that waste pickers are able to access their entitlements pertaining to housing as smoothly as possible. During the floods in 2019 the housing thematic lead worked towards ensuring that the waste pickers who had suffered heavy losses and damage to their property were able to get the assistance they are entitled to from the municipal authorities. The housing theme is also focusing on getting waste pickers access to SRA related benefits. In the wake of the floods, the housing theme has also focused on disaster mitigation

and rehabilitation as an area of intervention and is looking at developing an SOP to this end.

f. Legal:

Cases around legal issues continue to be reported to the helpdesk. As has been mentioned before, the urban poor struggle with getting recent legal aid and waste pickers are no exception to this. Very often waste pickers come under suspicion for theft or unwittingly get involved in violent incidents in their communities. In such cases the legal thematic vertical has proved to be extremely helpful as the legal thematic lead can immediately provide information about immediate steps to be taken and processes to be followed so that waste pickers are able to deal with the situation with slightly less difficulty. At present, we have an MoU with the Legal Aid Centre at ILS Law College, Pune which provides legal counselling and resolution using ADR mechanisms, and in cases where ADR mechanisms fail-provide a free lawyer. There is another MoU with Muskaan, another NGO working on issues of Child Sexual Abuse.

g. Pension:

Ensuring elderly waste pickers access to government schemes forms a large part of the work of the helpdesk. The Govt's NSAP formulated a pension scheme framework, under which different groups based on their marginalization get access to Rs. 1000/month as pension. There has been an effort at enrolling those eligible into these schemes. All such cases have been registered under this category.

h. Ration:

As mentioned before, there was a felt need to address the issue of ration among waste pickers as several calls around the issue of ration would come in. Cases relating to ration largely relate to complaints about not being able to get ration from the public distribution system, having lost card, having to provide documents for smooth ration delivery or getting card transferred to the place of residence etc. the cases that come in are duly recorded and then reported to the thematic lead who then goes on to provide assistance to the waste pickers in the form of giving information or hand holding through processes.

i. Other:

All miscellaneous complaints and grievances which do not fit in any of the above categories get recorded in the other section.

j. Work:

Work and integration into solid waste management systems are also cases that waste pickers call in with. Some of those who work in the existing door to door collection of waste set up call with complaints of harassment by municipal workers, citizens or the lack of safety equipment that is to be distributed to them.

Kashtakari Seva Kendra

The establishment of Kashtakari Seva Kendras (KSKs) for onsite delivery of services to waste pickers is a new experimental initiative that was made possible during this year. Kashtakari Seva Kendras (KSKs) bridge the gaps in the last mile delivery of benefits and services to waste pickers. The KSKs are community based centres that provide services and information to waste pickers living in slum pockets across the city. The push towards digitization has meant that many of the application processes for government entitlements are online. Waste pickers and their wards are systematically enrolled into schemes that have online application platforms. Such online platforms often prove to be disabling for waste pickers, who have little or no computer literacy resulting in many of them falling through the cracks in the system. The KSKs are therefore important links between entitlements and waste pickers. 9 different locations were identified by the waste picker leaders which were accessible and central to all areas around which, waste pickers live in the city of Pune. The physical spaces in which these centres have been established are varied- offices of people in the vastis, tie ups with other NGOs in the vastis, waste pickers' homes, sorting sheds, samaj mandirs etc. Currently there are 8 functional KSKs in the city of Pune.

The KSKs have been functional since June of 2019. The personnel in these KSKs are data enumerators who are entrusted with the job of filling out online forms for waste pickers and providing information about deadlines, when forms will be available for filling out and what documentation required, they need to keep ready for the process of filling out forms .eligibility and benefits. In addition to this, there are community mobilizers or Kashtakari Sagathikas who are daughters or daughter-in-law of members married into the community and are colloquially referred to as Sunbais or daughters - in - law. The Sunbais are active in the communities and assist with the process of enumeration in addition to also providing provide information to community members and mobilizing and organizing them.

These centres also serve the purpose of acting as nodal points where different groups such as waste picker representatives or youth groups can come together to conduct meetings or workshops. In future the KSKs are also envisaged to play the role of live museums, which act as information repositories about cost-effective housing options, recyclable materials etc.

Capacity building around Food Security

In order to empower waste pickers and strengthen their voices to campaign for their rights, KP believes in continuously building their capacities and strengths. The past year has been no different.

A series of 15 trainings were conducted across wards on the issue of obtaining ration through the public distribution system. The training provided a platform for waste pickers to put forward their issues, especially since a number of them are unable to procure ration because of systemic shortcomings. The training was also a medium to provide information to waste pickers about schemes and processes surrounding ration procurement, which many of them were unfamiliar with. Many other issues came to the fore during these trainings which were to do with documentation and the ration cards itself, such as loss of ration card or having been issued fake or illegal cards through agents. The information that came through from these sessions helped in coming up with strategies for redress such as guidance on how to get new ration cards and for organising waste pickers towards advocacy efforts pursue their entitlements.

Disaster mitigation

The year 2019 witnessed some of the heaviest and most incessant rainfall in the city of Pune. There was widespread flooding across the city, with many parts suffering intense waterlogging and damage to property. During such calamities, the poor and underprivileged become even more vulnerable as their already depleted resources come under threat. Many of the waste pickers associated with Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat and SWaCH live in low-lying areas of Pune, which experienced intense water logging for a protracted period. While in the PMC areas these families were evacuated to municipal schools that were functioning as makeshift shelters, in PCMC the affected members moved in with their relatives. With their lives in upheaval and under extremely unfavourable weather conditions these displaced waste pickers continued to do their jobs to keep the city clean. As the flood waters receded, waste pickers started returning to their homes only to find that their houses had been extensively damaged, and all their possessions had been washed away. Returning home meant taking stock of all that they had lost and, in most cases, rebuilding precariously positioned lives from

scratch. Those that had lost their belonging during the floods not only had to think about rebuilding their lives but getting back to normal everyday life, which included continuing work, sending their children to school and putting food on the table - a difficult proposition when money and resources were in short supply.

In the wake of the floods Kashtakari Panchayat supported the waste pickers in returning to normalcy. To do so KP received considerable aid from citizens across the city of Pune and even from other Indian cities. The relief material that was distributed during this time comprised basic bedding including Chattais, bedsheets and blankets, clothing such as saris, groceries - rice, lentils, atta, oil, sugar, tea, etc. books and school supplies and toiletries and other household supplies. This material was given to 525 families.

Flood affected areas and Ration Distribution

Sr No	Area	No. of Kits distributed
1	Pimpri	66
2	Fulenagar, Alandi Road	33
3	Topkhana	205
4	Patil Estate	240



Figure 5: Ration distribution

Education and the children of waste pickers

Education and the Rights of the Child

KP is committed to improving waste pickers' and their children's access to education over the past decade. KP believes that staying in school and acquiring secondary education and going on to do a degree presents waste pickers' and their children with more and varied opportunities for exploring alternative livelihoods and/or improving waste management systems so as to better their and their peers' working conditions. KP consistently strives towards this goal by reviewing and evolving newer approaches to ensure that waste pickers and their children have access to educational opportunities. We ensure this by undertaking direct-benefit transfers in the form of scholarships or provision of essential educational material such as notebooks and other stationary, ensuring enrolment in different government education schemes, undertaking research to understand gaps in the field and advocating with the government and other municipal authorities to encourage smooth implementation of schemes and policies related to education.

Sponsorship Program

The sponsorship program implemented by KP follows two routes, sponsorship to students who have scored above 60% in their last exams and to those who have passed their last exams irrespective of the percentage they scored. A sum of INR 6000/- is given to students from class I through XII to encourage retention in school and working towards higher education among children. We have also developed certain vulnerability criteria to ensure that the most deserving and needy within the community of waste pickers receive direct benefits. The process followed to identify children is -

KP field workers are trained to conduct home and school visits to

- a) Reach out to children who have received sponsorship earlier but have not updated their information
- b) To identify potentially vulnerable children in communities.

Field workers are also trained to conduct school visits to get a picture of children's academic performance. A format is used to get details about children's scholastic performance and other related information. They take information about a child's performance, the child's attendance, whether parents take an interest in the child's education, etc. This process is facilitated by

issuing letters of consent that allow them to ask these questions with the assurance that the information will be used towards improving children's performance and no other purpose.

The vulnerability criteria mentioned earlier includes:

- The child is an orphan.
- The child is looked after by a single mother.
- The child is abandoned.
- The child is critically unwell.
- One or both parents are critically unwell.
- The Child is differently abled.
- The child's family is affected by a natural disaster during the year.

278 children were ultimately identified for sponsorship in the PMC and PCMC areas and received the sponsorship money. Following disbursement of the sponsorship money, KP also ensures that the families spend money on the educational requirements of their wards only. To this end the KP field workers conduct home and school visit to understand how the child is faring at school, what problem he/she is facing, and whether parents take interest in the child's education.

Education, our biggest hope!



Chaya Shirsat is a waste collector from Aundh area of Pune. She works in the Abhimanshee society where she is integrated in the door to door collection model. She starts early and works from 6am to 9am in the society and then in a hospital from 10am to 8pm. In the initial years of her scrap collection she used to go to Lonavala to get anything substantial. She has a slip disc issue so she cannot work for long. The doctors have recommended surgery but since she cannot afford it and puts her children's education first, she is not ready for the surgical procedure yet. Her husband passed away 3 years ago. He was on a saline and due to some procedural complication was on bed rest for 8 years before he passed away. She also looked after her mother-in-law. She did not get any co-operation from her relatives.

Supriya appeared for her 10th this year and cleared all subjects despite the vulnerable family situation. She also helps with the house work as her mother is very busy. She wants to continue higher education either in Arts or would like to do a career in nursing, just like the way her sister has. Harshad loves to play and watch cartoons. Both of them go to Bharat English School. Amruta the eldest daughter is pursuing nursing. So their scholarship is directly used to pay her fees.

Chaya's children were covered under the sponsorship program. "The sponsorship money is useful in continuing the education. I want to make sure all my children grow up and have diverse careers. I am ready to take efforts for that" Chaya said.

Enrolment in Government Schemes

Enrolment of children in different government schemes is a major focus of KP. These schemes are particularly aimed at enabling children from lower socio-economic backgrounds to access education by giving necessary inputs in the form of scholarships to children. These scholarships include PMC's Lokshahir Annabhau Sathe and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad scholarships, Pre-matriculation scholarship for children of those engaged in cleaning occupations and

Scholarship for Sanitation workers (Ghanbhatta Shishyavrutti) of the Pune Municipal Corporation. While the first two are merit based, the other two are occupation specific.

Over the past years, the application process of many of the government scholarships has been shifted from an offline process to an online one. One of the problems, though, has been that the parallel infrastructure or support systems have not been established thus making the scholarships inaccessible. Repeated attempts at filling out application forms and not getting the benefits of the scheme has led to a certain amount of skepticism by the waste pickers. The online application platforms have led to a greater sense of alienation on the part of the waste pickers. To overcome these, the process of filling out application forms was decentralized and the technology was taken to the community through KP personnel assigned with this specific task.

Direct Benefits Transfer Scheme and Study

The Pune Municipal Corporation introduced Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for children enrolled in municipal schools from 2018 in keeping with the government's policy of cash transfers and having been riddled with allegations of corruption while procuring materials in the past. A fixed amount, depending upon the educational level, was transferred into bank accounts of the children towards the purchase of school uniforms, textbooks, school bags, shoes and other materials.

As part of these efforts, KP conducted a rapid survey of the direct benefits transfer (DBT) scheme to assess whether waste pickers had been able to access DBT and their perceptions about it. The 10% sample (100 waste pickers) included children of waste pickers studying in PMC run schools. Some of the major findings are given below. . The direct benefits scheme does cash transfers to beneficiaries in order to purchase material required by children to attend school. This includes uniforms, notebooks, textbooks and stationery. Using a sample of 100 waste pickers, representative of about 10% of waste pickers with school age children studying in PMC schools, the survey investigated the efficiency with which the scheme was being implemented, whether cash actually reached beneficiaries in a timely manner, whether the intended beneficiaries who received the money were utilizing it for the reasons it was received and what were some of the hurdles that waste pickers faced in accessing the scheme. The outcomes of the study will be used to influence advocacy measures with the government and Pune Municipal Corporation.

I] Receipt of Benefits

There were two issues relating to cash receipts a) whether cash had been transferred at all as of the survey period (1st to 15th August) b) if cash had been transferred, when was it credited to children's or waste pickers' accounts.

As to the former, 40% of the waste pickers had not received cash in their account at all as of August, 2019. This implies that waste pickers would either have to purchase the material on their own or go without. 29% of the waste pickers were not able to buy all or some of the material because cash hadn't been disbursed to their accounts. Of those who had received the cash, 9% received it as late as 13.08.2019 - almost 2 months into the academic session - and therefore had not purchased the material at the time of the survey.

II] Failure of government machinery at other levels

While the overarching concern with the scheme appears to be delays related to cash disbursement, there are other issues related to delivery and performance, which can't be denied and sometimes add to beneficiaries' problems.

Firstly, only 12% waste pickers were asked to produce bills for the items they purchased. It is unclear whether the scheme asks that beneficiaries submit bills against cash transferred.

Secondly, text messages intimating credit transfer are not commonly accessed by waste pickers because of the charges it incurs or because many of them may be unable to read the texts.

Thirdly, there are no readily available redressal mechanisms for any problems that beneficiaries may face. For example waste pickers asked who they can approach when there are delays in transfers or when money is not transferred at all.

III] Waste pickers' perceptions

Waste pickers were asked if they preferred the earlier system of educational material distribution at schools or the DBT scheme. 45 waste pickers said that there were absolutely no issues with the scheme and the remaining pointed out various problems because of which the earlier system was better. What's surprising here is that out of the 45 waste pickers that said there were no issues with the DBT scheme, 10 were those who had not received the cash benefit at all, demonstrating faith in the system and hope that they would still receive the money. The other 55 waste pickers who said there were problems with the DBT scheme, spoke about the process being tedious and requiring travel. However the larger concern remains the same i.e. delays in transfer or no transfer at all or not knowing if and when the money would be

credited to the accounts of the students. Finally, based on the waste pickers' inputs, it can be deduced that there is a lack of clarity and guidelines around the many of the particulars related to the scheme.

Sport and Extracurricular Activities -

Children benefit greatly from engaging in sports and other constructive activities outside of academics. KP understands the value of encouraging children to take up these kinds of activities and looks for ways to ensure that waste pickers' children, who do not otherwise have the chance to engage in sports and other activities get the opportunity to do so.

As part of this effort children from communities in Kharadi and Shivaji Nagar attended football practice sessions.

We are also trying to encourage children who are singularly gifted in areas other than academics. Jyotsna Londhe is one such example, she has shown exceptional performance in Karate and has competed in tournaments abroad as well. In 2019, a short film was made on her and her struggle to become an accomplished Karate practitioner.

Felicitation Program to encourage education: Jyoti Savirichi Lekra

A felicitation program for waste pickers' children who had successfully passed their exams was held on the 1st of October, 2019. The program called Jyoti Savitri chil Lekra, to commemorate Savitribai Phule, had been organised after several years of hiatus and therefore was even more momentous and was conducted amid a festive and celebratory air. This year a total of 214 children passed the board exams and graduated from college. 58 boys and 68 girls passed class X, while 29 girls and 35 boys passed class XII and 24 graduated from college.

Cultural activities such as songs, poems and a puppet show organized by some of the children on the importance of higher education, were performed. Some of the waste pickers and children were called upon to express their feelings and the overarching feeling that came across through their words was that of quiet but palpable pride in their children's hard earned achievements and high hopes for their collective future.



Figure 6: Jyoti Savitrichi Lekra

Because of the large number of students and time constraints, only those students who had scored highest percentage per category were awarded on stage. In class X Javed Anwar Makandar was the highest scorer at 74.4%. Madhuri Ganesh Chavan scored the highest in class X among girls with 85.6%. She aspires to be a computer engineer in the future. In class XII Avinash Lala Gaikwad scored the highest marks with 74%. He belongs to the commerce stream and is currently in the first year of B.Com. He aspires to appear in competitive exams. Priyanka Uttam Dahikamble scored 84% in class XII having taken Science. She is currently studying to be a computer engineer in Cummins College. The students were awarded 4000 INR.

There was a special mention and felicitation of two children whose circumstances are even more difficult than their peers. Sahil Jayaram Landge lost both his parents a few years ago. His grandmother, who is a member at KKPKP takes care of him. Another such student is Tejaswini Jagannath Kadam, she had not been able to pass the math exam in March, 2019. However, she did not give up and took the supplementary exam in July and passed. Sahil and Tejaswini were felicitated for continuing their studies in the face of extraordinary circumstances.

Larger advocacy work carried out

Taking forward the DBT survey conducted in August, we approached the Shikshan Mandal with the findings. It was explained that there was a delay due to technical reasons and the pending money would be disbursed. We got in touch with all the parents who had not received money for their children and after updating our information met the Officers in charge of DBT in the

Shikshan Mandal. Waste picker leaders were present and spoke about the difficulties they face due to delay in transfers and the officers clarified some roles and responsibilities of the bank, schools and the Shikshan Mandal.

We have also undertaken advocacy efforts with the Maharashtra government to increase the state government's share in the scholarship for unclean occupations. To this end we have approached MLAs from the areas where the KSKs are located with formal letters of appeal to advocate for increase in the government's contribution.

Engaging with the Young and the Restless

KP focuses on increasing participation and engagement of youth on different issues through capacity building measures so that they become enlightened and responsible citizens of the community, who give back to society.

Various capacity building activities have been undertaken with youth with a view towards preparing them as leaders in their communities and take forward issues and mobilize other youth around these issues. This year we have tried to focus on youth groups from different parts of the city and focus on issues that are important to them and which will stand to benefit them in future. Some of the members from the youth group participated in a puppetry workshop that was conducted in Rajasthan. This was with a view to facilitate using puppets as a medium of creating awareness about social issues among other youth as well as adults from their own as well other communities. The group has been trained in puppet making, scripting, and performing puppet shows. Following this, puppetry workshops were conducted with other youth



Figure 7: Puppetry workshop

groups in different parts of the city. A group of youth also presented a show prepared by them at the Felicitation program: Jyoti Savitrichi Lekra and at a convention organised by a donor organisation on the occasion of world environment day.

In April 2019, a pilot workshop with youth leaders from different communities was organised in partnership with a resource organisation called Prayas. Through this workshop we showcased a series of short films, developed by Prayas that give very precise information and act as an ice breaker for young people to talk about sex and sexuality. 22 youth leaders attended the workshop and some of them showed the readiness to take forward the issue in their communities and mobilise other youth to also talk about the issue. This initiative has since been taken forward in different communities with youth groups to talk about the issue of love and relationships and sexuality. The youngsters found this a valuable training session as it helped them discuss issues that are close their heart but that they can discuss with nobody else. Child sexual abuse was another issue that was tackled during some of these sessions.

A session was organised by the Chandu Kaka Saraf Trust on the need for greater awareness about menstrual hygiene for daughters of waste pickers. Some youth leaders attended this session. The trust then also distributed sanitary napkins to the girls and arranged for 1200 packets of sanitary napkins to be distributed to daughters of waste pickers. These have been distributed to 258 people so far. This year, youth leaders were also involved and led the mobilisation and distribution of notebooks in 2 KSKs. Youth volunteers were also present at other KSKs but the process was led and directed by the youth program at 2 centres.

In May 2019, 31 youth leaders travelled to the project area of Pani Foundation and participated in a day-long shramdaan effort for water conservation. This is the 3rd year that our youth leaders have been part of this process and this helps many of the youth leaders to connect between issues of natural resource management across the urban-rural divide. The event also helps build a sense of solidarity among the youth leaders and a deeper understanding of the issues that plague rural India, although all the youth are residents of a city.

CONCLUSION

The waste sector is a one that is ever evolving and changing rapidly with time. On one hand there are policy changes in solid waste management rules while at the same time the informal recycling market also undergoes subsequent transformations. KP has held the waste pickers at the core of the work and this has meant being the bridge and integrating the changes in a way that focusses on the livelihood of waste pickers. This year we explored waste segregation opportunities in the rural areas of Pune by collaborating with the local government bodies while continuing our work in the city of Pune. The project to achieve zero waste has seen support from citizens as well as the government and we would be continuing the same in the next year. The waste pickers have shown commitment in ensuring their children continue under the sphere of formal education. We would be exploring different avenues of support to ensure all children are supported through the education program.

The year saw an unprecedented change that would probably alter the lives of waste pickers significantly. With the sudden spread of Covid in India and more so in Maharashtra, there is an uncertainty with how the year would look like. The nationwide lock down was announced and it has adversely impacted the informal economy and in most families of waste pickers, the sole income generating member has been the waste picker. However, bracing all odds, the waste pickers have continued to work throughout the lock down and have been recognized as frontline workers by the government. In order to support the waste pickers, KP would focus on addressing the immediate needs like food security and their right to safe health by working towards ensuring PPE equipment and Ration kits.

While doing so, a major focus would be on the decentralization of the Help Desk. This is envisioned by ensuring a robust field support system to be set up by capacity building and training of the field staff. All being planned with the aim to support the waste pickers and their cooperatives to access their entitlements - be it with respect to livelihood or with their plans to create a next generation that would explore higher education opportunities while continuing to support the cause of waste pickers.