



SWaCH

A higher level of self-reliance

Newsletter

Pension Parishad continues: Chalo Dilli!

When the Pension Parishad was held in Pune in February 2012, participants resolved to take the demand for pensions for unorganised sector workers, right to the doorsteps of policy-makers. And that is precisely what happened when the Pension Parishad was held in the heart of the capital city, recently, in the month of May. Nearly 3000 unorganised sector workers from 22 states, camped out at Jantar Mantar for five days, demanding that their voices be heard. The largest representation was from Maharashtra, with 688 workers. An enthusiastic team of 87 SWaCH and KKP members also joined the dharna.

The SWaCH/KKP team travelled to Delhi via Indore where they broke journey and had the opportunity to interact with a local waste picker organisation. Many of the team were travelling so far from home for the first time, and the journey was full of new experiences and high expectations. They were also genuinely keen to learn about other waste picker organisations in distant cities.

Reaching New Delhi, the team made their way to Jantar Mantar, where all the participants were to gather. It was a massive responsibility for the organisers to provide food, shelter and sanitation for over 3000 people, many elderly, but participants say that organisational teamwork conquered all obstacles! Hamal Panchayat were responsible for providing two meals a day – served in long lines to people sitting along the designated roads; local gurudwaras and other such institutions offered their sanitation facilities; and sleeping arrangements were in shamianas at the venue. Everyone contributed whatever they could to the daily collection, in order to defray costs.

Each of the five days of the Pension Parishad had a fixed agenda – for example, there was a people's hearing (Jan Sunwai) where complaints, suggestions and experiences about accessing pensions and grievance redressal, were recorded. There were also speeches and statements of support by a wide range of eminent citizens, politicians, and labour leaders. In the evenings, many groups broke into song and dance, staged small performances, or put up small stalls.



The SWaCH/KKP team marched proudly in the morcha with their banners. They also took the time to visit several organisations in New Delhi which worked with waste and waste pickers – such as the waste picker organisations Chintan, All India Kabadi Mazdoor Sangh and Sweccha.



The pension campaign captured the attention of not only the national media but also parliamentarians, trade unions, academics, senior citizens' associations and other civil society organisations. Says one SWaCH member who went to New Delhi: 'The issue was even brought up in Zero Hour in Parliament as a direct result of the dharna. That was our big achievement.'

V-Collect Clothes:

SWaCH and KKP KP feel strongly that positive change can be brought by working at various levels simultaneously – our advocacy for policy change and struggle for workers' rights, goes hand-in-hand with efforts to partner with citizens in practical actions that bring in change at a more local level. V-Collect Clothes, our recent initiative to collect and redistribute/recycle old clothes is one such effort that is proving popular.

Organised in partnership with local businesses and citizens' groups, V-Collect Clothes has met with more success than was initially anticipated. The collection drives in June garnered strong support from Pune's citizens who donated generous amounts of clothes – all clean, laundered and wearable, as requested. These were then sorted according to gender, age and condition, and a minimal price was fixed before putting them up for sale.

There was an equally positive response from those who availed of the donated clothes – many waste pickers turned up every day to pick up clothing for their families and for themselves. Sarita Gaikwad of Indira Vasti, for example, could never get herself to spend on clothes, prioritising nutrition and education instead. V-Collect Clothes gave her an opportunity to pick up clothes not only for her boys, but for her sister's new born as well. "We never normally buy clothes for infants," she said, "but these were so attractive, and so reasonably priced, that I made an exception!"

SWaCH views the V-Collect Clothes campaign as an on-going initiative with a two-pronged aim – one is to provide an outlet for affordable clothing, but equally importantly, V-Collect Clothes is a practical way of bringing home the spirit of the much-used slogan 'Reduce/Re-use/Recycle'.

SWaCH members feel that it is important to counter the 'use-and-throw', 'me-first' mentality that has taken hold. People must be reminded not only to think about those who work almost invisibly in keeping our communities clean and functioning, but also about the life-cycle of the products we use, our choices as consumers.

SWaCH has found several new partners in this venture – Rotary Club, LIC, various housing societies and schools such as Orchid School, have made commitments to hold regular V-Collect Clothes events.

SWaCH News

Vasundhara Award



On Environment Day, June 5, member waste pickers Sunita Swami, Anita Dahake, Meena Khude and KKP KP Chairperson, Mohan Nanavare were in Mumbai to receive the Vasundhara Award granted by the state Environment Ministry for the film

'We, Swach' ('Aamhi, SWaCH'). This film, directed by Amit Thavaraj, documents the door-to-door waste collection work of SWaCH. It won the first prize in the amateur category, at the Aapla Paryavaran Film Festival.

Waste pickers' children score in exam

Sayali Gawre and Akshay Gaikwad, children of waste pickers, scored 79% and 84% respectively in this year's SSC examination.

Sayali, of Vitthalrao Shivarkar School in Hadapsar said, "My brother Niranjana, who had secured 86 per cent in his SSC exam, is studying to be an engineer. He helped me with my studies and I also studied on my own." Sayali wants to take up Commerce and become a teacher.

Akshay has lived with his aunt Sangeeta – whom he calls 'aai' – since he was 6 months old. "I don't know my father as he abandoned us, and my mother also deserted me a few years ago." This tragic start in life does not seem to have held him back, though and he plans to make his aunt proud.

Let's meet:

Rupali S. Kale



Rupali Sharad Kale has a smile that lights up her whole face. One would think she hadn't a care in the world, but this SWaCH member from Mangalwar Peth, Juna Bazaar, has had more than her share of troubles in the past. Now, as a single parent of four children who are at various stages of their schooling, she has only one dream: 'I want my children to be educated, independent, and settled in good jobs – only then will I be able to relax.'

Rupali started collecting waste when she was just 10 years old. Obviously, schooling never entered the picture. Married in 1997 at the age of 15, she was busy shouldering adult responsibilities at far too young an age. Her husband, also a waste picker, did not do much to relieve her burden – addicted to drink, and unable to support his family, he committed suicide, leaving her to bring up the four children on her own. 'I couldn't have done it without the sanstha,' says Rupali. 'The kind of support it has given me – in finding schools, in getting loans, in resolving disputes – has been invaluable.' Rupali became a member of the waste pickers' union KKP KP around 1996, even before she was married. 'We were a group of us, with our sacks on our backs, busy picking up waste from the road, when a woman came up to us and told us about the waste pickers' sanstha...'

Rupali feels that SWaCH and KKP KP have not only helped her with work-related issues, but have changed the way she lives her life – 'Thanks to the sanstha, I organise my home better, I look after my family better, and I am careful about cleanliness. I don't even quarrel as much as I used to!' she says, laughing.

Rupali starts her day at 7, pushing her cart along the roads near RTO and Pune station. Like other SWaCH members, she also collects waste door-to-door and sells recyclable dry waste. As Ward Pratinidhi for the Dhole Patil Rd Ward, Rupali organises meetings of her co-workers, raises issues at the kothi meetings, and puts forth their demands to the corporation officials. She

also makes sure that the waste pickers in her area contribute 5% of their wages to the union.

'We have to support the union because it supports us. I am not one to keep quiet about things, and I feel confident knowing my supervisors will back me.'

Rupali's daughter, Anita, wants to be a Collector. She is in 7th. Two of Rupali's sons, with the support of the organisation, study in a boarding school.

Says Rupali ruefully: 'I also wanted to be educated and work in an office... With a pen in my hand, who could have stopped me?'

SWaCH salutes:

Vidya and Sujit Patwardhan

Vidya and Sujit Patwardhan are a well-known couple in Pune, with wide-ranging interests spanning education, literature, music, social justice issues and of course, deep concern for the environment. But they do not only pay lip-service to these issues, they offer concrete support: this environmentally-conscious couple has shown their support to SWaCH and to recycling, by allowing the organization to build a sorting shed in front of their bungalow in ICS colony.

Without complaining about potential smells, messy sacks, and other people's waste in their front garden, Vidya and Sujit willingly offered the bit of land between their boundary wall and the footpath for use as a 'waste pickers' office'. The Bhosale



Nagar Mohalla Committee supported this move and a sorting shed was set up. Grateful for the convenience of a dedicated place to store and sort waste, the waste pickers have certainly lived up to their end of the bargain by keeping this space spotlessly clean.

Our special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Patwardhan!

Training:

Communication training

As an organisation providing a professional service to citizens, SWaCH tries to inculcate new skills in its members and upgrade existing ones, through creative training programmes. In the past, our members have interacted with other organisations working with waste; have learned to drive our tempos; and have understood the basics of leadership development. Communication Training is another training programme which is popular with our members.

The Communication Training module is imparted with the help of a specially commissioned training film. Called "Me, Sugandha", the film was inaugurated by Mr Suresh Jagtap, Joint Commissioner SWM, on 8th June.



Through its 'actors' - puppet-characters such as Sugandhabai, the ideal member - the film addresses issues like how to communicate with citizens, the importance of punctuality, ensuring that a substitute is in place during absences, etc. Inevitably, participants in the training session identify with the film's puppet characters and the issues they are dealing with, leading to lively discussions.

This training has been conducted by Area Coordinators in different parts of Pune. The feedback has been positive and there has been a visible change in the way members who participated in the training subsequently interact with citizens. Said one waste picker in her feedback: "I am like that feisty puppet - fighting with everyone, but now that I know how I appear, I will try to change myself."

Two kothis per ward were covered in the month of July, with 148 members participating in the training.

Orientation training

60 new members of SWaCH took part in the Orientation Training in June, July and August. They learned about the history of Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakar Panchayat, the development of SWaCH as a cooperative and the qualities expected of a professional service organisation.

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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cityscape >>3

SWaCh refutes charges by PCMC, expects cooperation

Waste pickers agency highlights the anomalies that exist in working contract

CAMIL PARKHE
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Pimpri SWaCh, the agency entrusted with the task of collection and segregation of wet and dry garbage in A and D wards of the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has written to the civic body relating charges of ignoring interests of its employees. It has also sought PCMC's help in removing the anomalies in its works contract to make the scheme more effective.



EMPHATIC SWaCh CEO Shubana Diler (R) at the garbage collection and segregation centre of the agency at Sangli on Saturday

'स्वच्छ' संस्था लावणार ई - कचऱ्याची विल्हेवाट

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'आपल्या घरातील जुन्या इलेक्ट्रॉनिक वस्तू, बंद पडलेले रेडिओ, बॅटरी, कम्प्युटरचे पार्ट, चार्जर, अजदी मोबाइलदेखील कचऱ्यात टाकू नका...

आमचे प्रतिनिधी केवळ तुमच्यासाठी कमला नेहरू पार्कच्या बाहेर सकाळी नऊ ते बारा या वेळेत हजर राहणार आहेत. आरोग्यास हानीकारक असलेल्या ई - कचऱ्याची शास्त्रीय पद्धतीने विल्हेवाट लावण्यासाठी आम्हाला सहकार्य करा,' असे आवाहन केले आहे, स्वच्छ संघटनेने.

कमला नेहरू पार्कबाहेर रविवारी गोळा करणार

पर्यावरणपूरक पद्धतीने ई - कचऱ्याची विल्हेवाट आणि पुनर्वापर करण्यासाठी स्वच्छ संघटनेने पुढाकार घेतला आहे. नागरिकांच्या घरात किंवा ऑफिसमध्ये निघणारा ई-कचरा गोळा करण्यासाठी संस्थेने खास 'ई कचरा कलेक्ट' मोहीम हाती घेतली आहे. या उपक्रमाची सुरुवात शनिवारी कमला नेहरू पार्क येथे झाली. पहिल्याच दिवशी नागरिकांचा या उपक्रमाला उत्स्फूर्त प्रतिसाद मिळाला. नागरिकांनी सीडी, कॅसेट, मोनिटर, की बोर्ड, कम्प्युटर, जुने रेडीओ, टेप रेकॉर्डर आणून दिले. रविवारी सकाळी नऊ ते बारा या वेळेत संस्थेचे प्रतिनिधी कमला नेहरू पार्कबाहेर उभे राहणार आहेत.

Giving back to society: Josh reaches out to deprived kids

Employees of Tech Mahindra, Mahindra Satyam and NGOs take initiative with awareness programme - 17 August
DNA Correspondent 2012

As part of the Independence Day celebrations, employees of Tech Mahindra and Mahindra Satyam and several non-governmental organisations (NGOs) held an awareness programme, Parivartan, at which the guests from the deprived sections of society were invited.

The children were from Suhrud Mandal, Jagriti School, Door Step School, India Sponsorship Committee, Sarvesham, Akshara, KB Hire School



Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) presented a play on child rights

and Kagal Kach Parra Kashiakari Ranchawat, all organisations supported by the Tech Mahindra Foundation SWaCh (a service co-operative of women waste pickers in Pune) spoke about their work

थोडक्यात

पेन्शन मागणी सप्ताह पिंपरी ■ म. टा. प्रतिनिधी

देशात सार्वत्रिक पेन्शन लागू करावी, या मागणीसाठी नऊ ते १५ ऑगस्ट या कालावधीत पेन्शन मागणी सप्ताह पाळला जाणार आहे, असा इशारा कागद, काच, पत्रा, कष्टकरी पंचायतीने दिला आहे. यासंदर्भात कष्टकरी संघटनांची बैठक झाली. यावेळी नागरी हक्क सुरक्षा समितीचे अध्यक्ष मानव कांबळे, अंगमेहनती कष्टकरी समितीचे निमंत्रक नितीन पवार, संगीता जॉन, अशोक मिरगे, अमिर शेख, रजनी पाटोळे, रसिला वराडे, मारुती निंबाळकर, शैलेश गाडे, नितीन कदम उपस्थित होते.

'स्वच्छ'च्या भूमिकेला पाठिंबा

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■ काम न करण्याच्या निर्णयावर संस्था ठाम

पिंपरी-विशेष महाराष्ट्रातील स्वच्छाचारियेकडून काम न करण्याच्या 'अडक' संस्थेला विविध विविध संस्था आणि संघटनांनी मदत दिली आहे. त्यामुळे वास्तुविक्रय करणारे जे आणि हे प्रकरणातील काम न करण्याच्या भूमिकेवर संस्था ठाम आहे.

प्रमुख मागण्या

- कचरापेक्षांना किमान वेतन मिळावे
- सुविधेसाठी कचरा वेळोवेळी घेतला जावा
- वेळोवेळी राखणीकामाचा दर्जा उंचावा
- सरकारी सवलतुसार कर्मचारी वगैरे
- पर्यावरणाचे धोका नसावा

SWaCH to take items not wanted in homes

Sakal Times



INITIATIVE: The SWaCh members sorting out the recyclable and useable items from the garbage.

REPORTER

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Pune: Want to clean your residence by discarding unwanted goods. Then be a part of 'V-Collects' initiative of SWaCh. 'V-Collects' is a green and practical alternative of disposing off household items without harming the environment.

PLEASE CONTACT

■ For organising the 'V-Collects event' in their colonies and societies, citizens can contact on SWaCh helpline at 9765999500 or 9158007062 or visit swachcoop.com