



The Impact Of The Swachh Bharath Abhiyan On Wastepickers Earnings

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Abstract

The current study used a hybrid research style that combines desk-based and field-based techniques to validate the conclusions and provide a comprehensive review of how the Swachh Bharat Mission has influenced waste pickers' earning potential and quality of life. The study concentrated on urban areas, specifically Alwal, Venkatapuram, and Macha Bollaram, which are all part of Hyderabad's Alwal municipality. A sample size of 120 waste pickers was selected from the current study to evaluate the goals. The Clean Indian Mission gave waste pickers a way to improve their earning potential and, as a result, their socioeconomic standing. According to the study, waste collection, sorting, and transportation is a challenging task that necessitates competence and patience. Furthermore, because they view waste as gold, waste pickers take pride in their line of work. Despite the fact that the Swachh Bharat Mission is not intended to provide employment for garbage pickers. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's primary goals are to make Indian cities clean and to attain the zero-waste target. According to the report, the Clean Indian Mission offered waste pickers with an opportunity to boost their earning potential and, as a result, their socioeconomic position. The Mission provided the opportunity for waste pickers to learn the skill to drive auto tippers. One of the things the Clean Indian Mission introduced was a competitive atmosphere, which drove every municipality to improve and offer new techniques to solid waste management, and thus be in constant rivalry to do better than the other municipality.

Key Words: Waste Picker, Clean India Mission, Solid Waste Management, Door-to- Door, Skill

1. Introduction

Wastepickers are a perfect illustration of how some groups of people have historically been ignored, disregarded, or denied their rights and recognized. In many communities, wastepickers—also referred to as waste collectors or informal recyclers—play a critical role in managing waste, but their efforts are sometimes disregarded or underestimated (Jandira Morais et al 2022).

Wastepickers do experience many of the aforementioned problems, including low income, low social status, and restricted access to resources. This can be linked to a number of things, such as systematic neglect, economic inequality, and societal views on particular professions. In the context of India's historical and social dynamics, the problems faced by waste pickers are further complicated by the junction of caste, class, and discrimination.

Throughout Indian history, the caste system has been a major factor in determining occupational positions and social hierarchies. People from particular castes, like the Valmiki's, were frequently assigned to dirty or menial jobs, such as waste management and sanitation. Waste pickers are still impacted by a cycle of marginalization brought about by the societal shame and discrimination that have been linked to this particular caste's affiliation with such jobs (Chintan, 2011).

Waste pickers are vital to the urban environment but also devalued because of prevalent social views, despite their crucial contributions to recycling and garbage management. Garbage pickers' marginalized status is reinforced by the belief that they are "dirty" or unclean. This belief stems from deeply rooted biases and prejudices. Because of this, wastepickers' labour has become less valuable, and their contributions to environmental sustainability and public health have received less acknowledgement.

Furthermore, wastepickers are unable to improve their living conditions due to their low social position and lack of access to resources like technology and money. It is challenging for them to make investments in tools and equipment that might raise their income and efficiency if they do not have access to credit or financial services. In a similar vein, a lack of technology and expertise may hinder their ability to implement more sophisticated waste management techniques (Chikarmane, 2016; Gill, 2010).

Activists and academics have, in fact, widely documented the important roles that waste pickers and informal recyclers play in delivering essential waste management services. Recyclable products must be gathered, sorted, and separated from the garbage stream by waste pickers. By their engagement, the quantity of waste delivered to landfills and incinerators is greatly decreased, saving towns money on waste disposal expenses. Recycling is collected and transported at the expense of waste pickers, which relieves the financial strain on local governments (Luthra, 2020a).

In reality, the J. S. Bajaj Committee of 1994 and the Comptroller Auditor General's (CAG) 2007 Report are two key sources of guidance and proposals for improving the lives and circumstances of waste pickers in India. The National Environment Protection Act of 2006, the Climate Change Action Plan of 2009, and the CAG Report of 2002 all highlighted waste pickers' substantial contributions to recycling in India. They urged that waste collectors and municipal governments collaborate to enhance waste management methods. They insisted on collaboration between waste collectors and local authorities to enhance waste handling protocols (Akhileshwari Reddy & Alok Prasanna Kumar, 2018).

2. Swachh Bharat Mission, 2014

The government of India began the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) or "Clean India Mission" on October 2, 2014, the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi. This campaign evolved into a mass movement under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Solid waste management (SWM) is a major issue for many urban local bodies (ULBs) in India, where urbanization, industrialization, and economic development have resulted in increased municipal solid waste (MSW) creation per capita.

Considerable progress has been achieved in acknowledging and valuing waste pickers' contributions to India's solid waste management under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It made a significant effort to enhance waste pickers' working conditions and standing within the waste management system, even though it did not address everything. The Swachh Bharat Mission's amended Solid Waste Management Rules of 2016 emphasized the need of identifying waste picker groups and incorporating them into waste management activities. This official legitimacy afforded by the regulations aided garbage pickers in their status.

The mission's first phase (2014-2019), also targeted the abolition of manual scavenging, raising knowledge and influencing behavior on sanitation methods, and building capacity at the local level. The mission's second phase (2019-2023) aimed to enhance solid and liquid waste management, while also aiming to improve the lives of sanitation workers. The goal of the mission is to move closer to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 6, which was set by the United Nations in 2015. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs conducted the Swachh Survekshan Survey 2019 in order to rank the cities according to a cleanliness index. The percentage of Informal Waste Pickers who are formally integrated into Sustainable Livelihoods through Self-help groups (SHGs), Cooperatives, Contractors, or NGOs was one of the parameters that the Swachh Survekshan 2019 raised the scoring threshold to 40 points (L.C. De, 2022).

3. Objectives of the Study

This the intent of this study is to examine the following goals, which are listed below:

1. To investigate the impact of the Swachh Bharat Mission on garbage pickers' ability to make a living.
2. Did it offer trash pickers any kind of social security?
3. What is the purpose of the Swachh Bharath Mission? Is it to include wastepickers or to clean?

4. Research methodology

The current study used a hybrid research style that included desk-based and field-based techniques. We were able to triangulate the results, validate the conclusions, and provide a thorough evaluation of how the Swachh Bharat Mission has impacted the earning potential and quality of life of waste pickers by integrating both based methodologies.

The desk-based research entails examining current waste management and waste pickers legislation, rules, regulations, government decrees, and court pronouncements. This aided in providing our study with a solid legal and regulatory framework. We were given a more comprehensive viewpoint and assisted in comprehending the corpus of existing knowledge by the literature evaluation of studies done on the wellbeing of waste pickers and related subjects.

The case study method was used in the field-based research, with a qualitative and quantitative approach, semi-structured questionnaires, unstructured interviews, and participant observation. This hands-on approach enables us to collect primary data and insights from rubbish pickers directly. We were able to acquire quantifiable data on wastepickers' earning potential and quality of life using the questionnaire method. The observations, on the other hand, gave direct information about waste pickers' daily activities, work surroundings, and living conditions. The visits were done on a regular basis between September 2020 and February 2021 to allow for participant observation two to six times each week. The interviews began in April 2021 and will continue until April 2022. A great deal of care was taken when meeting and interviewing waste pickers, especially given their vulnerability.

Since the process and its meaning were the main focus of this study, a qualitative technique was used to solve the research problem (Trevino's, A. (1987). As stated, the goal of the qualitative method is to comprehend the reasoning behind real-world practices rather than to get at the truth (Minayo, M. 2003). In summary, describes a case study as an empirical study that seeks to analyze a current event in its real-life context (Yin, R.K, 1984). As a result, numerous sources of evidence were required for the current work.

5. Area of the Study

The study's focus was on urban areas, specifically Alwal, Venkatapuram, and Macha Bollarum, which are all part of **Hyderabad's** Alwal municipality. Because these locations accurately depict the urban setting of the region, they were selected as the spatial extent. A sample size of 120 waste pickers was chosen for the investigation. The three municipal localities of Alwal (ward number 134), Macha Bollarum (ward number 133), and Venkatapuram (ward number 135) received an equal portion of the sample. (Wikipedia,2020).

6. Data Collection

This initiative's primary research method was a survey done with door-to-door waste collectors. Surveys were done with a total of 105 respondents from the municipality of Alwal.

7. Results

The first quarterly status report for the year 2018–19 (April 2018 to June 2019) details how Telangana is doing in terms of following the National Green Tribunal's directives on the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. The Garbage generated in Hyderabad city and other Urban Local bodies in Telangana is listed below.

Table 1. Status of compliance of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in Telangana (National Green Tribunal, 2019)

Garbage	GHMC	141 ULBs	Total	Remarks
Total garbage Generated	5579 MT	3329 MT	8908 MT	
Total garbage Collected	5459 MT	3262 MT	8721 MT	100 % achieved by 31.10.2019
% of Garbage lifted	97.8%	98%	97.9%	
Total Number of Households	2278240	1958201	42,36,441	100 % achieved by 31.10.2019
No. Of House Hold covered under (Door to Door) D2D	2228118	1840708	40,68,826	
Percent (%) of D2D garbage collected	97.8%	94%	96%	
Percent (%) of Garbage Segregated	62%	24%	43%	100 % achieved by 31.03.2020

The overall composition/characteristics of the municipal solid waste is Organic: 50-60%, Inorganic and recyclable: 25% (papers 8.13, Plastic rubber – 9.22; Metal and Glass – 1-1.5%.; Rags – 4-4.5 % and others – 4%; remaining inert material (20-25%).

8. Observation Method

8.1 Status of waste Pickers Prior to Swachh Bharat Mission, 2014

The majority of rubbish collectors are either contractual employees of the municipality or are paid independently by resident welfare associations. In certain circumstances, workers are paid individually by each family and make their livelihood from this monthly collection. They have a tricycle cart that allows them to make many excursions around the colonies they service. Typically, 2 or 3 personnel working 7 hours a day are necessary to collect and segregate all trash from 200 residences. About thirty homes' worth of trash is piled into one bike cart. Every household occasionally consists of three independent living floors, all of which produce rubbish daily. It takes nine cart journeys to get a colony with 300 households to the next collection location. However, we neglect to consider a significant portion of the daily tasks, such as the level of segregation our garbage requires. The low monthly collection charge of Rs. 50 from each house and recyclables sales are the only sources of income for waste collectors. They either don't receive gloves, masks, or boots, or if they do, they refuse to use them because they make the job easier.

8.2 Legal status to Waste Pickers after Swachh Bharat Mission, 2016

The effective 'Swachh Auto Tippers Driver cum Owner' project in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and the efforts of the Telangana government to control solid waste. This plan appears to have a number of goals and advantages that might significantly improve garbage management, waste pickers' quality of life, and community well-being. The government hopes to improve waste management by giving ULBs access to the infrastructure they need for collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal. Both the GHMC and the beneficiaries waste pickers must make a financial commitment to the program. In order to guarantee that the program is available waste pickers in need while limiting the financial burden, beneficiaries contribute 10% of their total income, with GHMC making up the remaining 90%. Under a driver/owner model, this program offers auto tippers to rag pickers and underprivileged people. Every Swachh Auto Tipper has a designated service area that includes between 650 and 750 houses. This focused strategy guarantees effective garbage collection and transportation. Waste pickers receive several benefits from the plan, one of which is a chance to make a living. Their income may also be augmented by proceeds from the sale of recyclables and

user fees. By the time the loan period ends, beneficiaries can own the vehicles thanks to the scheme's model, giving them a valuable asset that can continue to bring in money. All things considered, this plan seems to be an all-encompassing strategy for enhancing solid waste management procedures, encouraging inclusivity by include the impoverished and waste pickers, and working toward more sustainable and cleaner urban settings throughout Telangana. Selling the recyclables, they have gathered to the kabaddiwalas will allow them to make additional money.

8.3 Interaction with waste pickers (Interview Method)

Under the Alwal Municipality, 150 auto tippers are in operation. Every responder who was seen and interviewed was found to use Swachh Bharat auto Tippers to collect trash from 350–425 homes. Depending on the neighbourhood, each respondent received tipping payments ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 150 from each house. They work from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and make at least 4 or 5 trips per day. If they are absent in the morning, they occasionally work from 2 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Table 2. Earning potential of waste pickers Under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Respondent (120 Nos.)	Houses	Earning from door to Door (In Rs.)	Monthly Maintenance Cost (In Rs.)	Earning from Recyclables (In Rs.)	Total Monthly Earnings (In Rs.)
50	350	40000	15000	7000	32,000
22	375	41,250	15000	7500	33,500
15	425	48,750	18000	8500	39,000
17	400	45,000	17000	8000	35,982
16	390	43,500	15000	8250	36,750

- Prior to Swachh Bharat Scheme they used to earn between Rs. 9000-13500/ month

The preceding table clearly shows that after the introduction of Driver sum Auto tipper under Clean India Mission, earnings increased significantly from Rs. 9000-12000 to Rs. 32,000-39,000, respectively. The number of residences visited by each waste picker has also increased, and the pay as you generate model has been successfully implemented thanks to the intervention of the GHMC.

9. Discussion

According to the Solid Waste Management Compliance Report submitted by the Telangana Government to the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2019 under the guidelines set by the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, the total garbage generated in Hyderabad alone was 5579 MT per day, while the remaining 141 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) generated 3329 MT per day. This is consistent with Premsudha et al., (2022), who estimated garbage generation in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) at 6000 MT per day. According to the GHMC, the city generated nearly 1,500 tons of more rubbish while celebrating Diwali, with workers collecting 7,570.28 tonnes on October 22, 7,964.68 tonnes on October 23, and 7,065.48 tonnes on Monday (Deccan Chronicle, 2022).

Before the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was put into effect in Hyderabad, rubbish was collected door to house by tricycle and thrown in dustbins located one kilo-meter apart. The garbage was then collected and transported to the dumpyard by GHMC vehicles. The biggest disadvantage of this collection technique prior to Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan was the presence of stray animals at each dustbin and annoyance location; waste pickers were also observed undertaking segregation activities at spots that resulted in a filthy appearance. Initially, a door-to-door collecting system was developed as a pilot project using tractors that were not close body vehicles, implying that transportation was not carried out in accordance with prescribed standards. Municipal solid trash is collected door to door and then emptied at transfer stations, where it is placed into larger open top tippers covered with tarpaulin sheets and transported to the Jawahar Nagar treatment and disposal plant (Swetha Dandapani, 2015). The locals blame the threat posed by mosquitoes and flies carrying waste for skin ailments. "They could not walk freely inside or outside of their homes because of the stench of open rubbish. The GHMC saw the start of clean Indian Mission as a challenge to maintain the city trash-free and tidy, thus attaining zero waste goal for the city.

This evolved the Owner-Driver program for collection of door-to-door trash in covered Swachh Auto tippers with distinct compartments for dry and wet waste, making segregation simple.

The Telangana government launched the driver-owner program for door-to-door waste pickup as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission. Since 2016, Hyderabad's Swachh Bharat (Clean India) journey has seen a significant metamorphosis. When the Hyderabad Municipality included waste pickers in its attempts to keep the city clean, it was a trailblazing move. This novel strategy represented a substantial departure from traditional waste management techniques (Elets, 2017).

The motorized tipper not only helped the waste pickers enhance their earning possibilities, but it also helped them learn the new skill of driving. Apart from that, we can observe that the waste pickers who participated in the plan were motivated by the opportunity to make more money, and they were able to cover twice as many residences in the door-to-door initiative. Not only was time saved, but the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan aim of zero waste was met within the first two to three years of the scheme's implementation. Aside from that, these garbage collectors took ownership of cleaning up the city.

Waste collection, classification, and transportation is a difficult procedure that demands skill and patience. And the waste pickers take pride in their profession because they see waste as gold. Aside from that, they generate extra money by recycling dry garbage. As we can see, one of the key goals of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is to make Indian cities clean and to achieve the zero-waste target. However, the Swachh Bharat Mission is not intended to offer employment for waste pickers. It simply instructs the municipality on how to achieve the aim by including refuse pickers into the primary solid waste management program.

10. Conclusion

In a sense, the Clean Indian Mission provided waste pickers with an avenue to increase their earning potential and, consequently, their socioeconomic standing. Additionally, the Mission eliminated the outdated methods for achieving the clean India objectives by introducing new technologies such as waste to energy, the use of truck-mounted refuse compactors, and portable stationary compactors at secondary collections points. These measures reduced the amount of waste that was left lying around on the roads and in close proximity to people for extended periods of time. Every municipality is encouraged by this mission to improve and introduce fresh approaches to the solid waste management domain. Since the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was implemented, every municipal corporation has been in competition with one another to introduce new technology and figure out how to manage solid waste more effectively than the others. Consequently, in order to achieve these aims, the role of waste pickers participating in door-to-door collection, segregation, and transportation has become critical, particularly since the development of covid 19.

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