



GREEN COLLAR WOMEN



Acknowledgement

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All monetary references are in ₹ Indian Rupee.



AKKA SHIVAJI KSHIRSGAR

AGE	58
GENDER	Female
ADDRESS	Hadapsar (relocated from Topkhana in 2020 due to METRO work)
FAMILY	Son, daughter-in-law (alternates living with either)

THE OPTIMISTIC ENTREPRENEUR

"Mai chulicha lakud chulilach jalnaar" (dear one, firewood will always burn in the hearth) was what Akkabai's father told her when she wanted to continue her education after primary school (class IV). That did not deter Akkabai from developing her entrepreneurial skills such that her income is now the mainstay for the families of her two alcoholic sons! "In fact, just as I was leaving the house, my daughter in law asked me to give her some 20 rupees to buy a quarter kilo of rice! She also told me to buy two kilos of wheat so we can mix it with the government subsidized wheat that we get from the ration shop."

Married at 13 to a waste picker, whose parents were also Matangs and waste pickers, Akkabai says, "Within six monthly periods I was pregnant and before I realized it, the mother of four children! I never stopped work through all this! One child in my arms, another in the basket, five weeks after childbirth I was back to the bhangar dhanda (scrap work)".

Akkabai has been a waste picker since she was eight, and has done all kinds of waste collection. As a child she accompanied other waste pickers from her vasti, to Lonavla on the 6 am train and sold her material at Patil Estate for 5 rupees before heading home to Kamgar Putala. Her mother did dabba batli dhanda (itinerant waste buying) and had a pass to enter the Hindustan Antibiotics Colony. Akkabai did itinerant waste picking with a sack, like her father. She even worked as a SWaCH door to door collector in Model colony for a few (5-6) years. "In those days SWaCH work was not remunerative enough. People were not paying so much in user-fees and we didn't get too much scrap either." She even worked in distant Dhankawadi on a waste collection truck through SWaCH but did not find that viable as she had to travel over 15 kms for work and to sell the collected recyclables! Dabbabatli was easier. "If I bought recyclable materials worth 200 rupees, I would make a clean 200 rupees on it". So steeped is Akkabai in the business that she

is not joking when she says, "Everyone knows me and I know everyone! I used to go to HA, colony, Masulkar Colony in Pimpri, a scrap dealer from Patil Estate would give me capital of 200-400 rupees and I would sell the material to her and make 100 rupees. It was quite a lot in those days!" "I also did waste collection in the Bopodi slum, through SWaCH. There the earnings had improved but when my daughter-in-law needed help during her delivery, I took a few days off and the woman that I put as my substitute absconded. It was my mistake. I didn't check every day and the coordinator put another woman in my place. I told him, he should have called me, but anyway, I lost that job. In Bopodi each household paid me between 40 and 60 each month and I covered 300 houses. Some slums rehabilitated into buildings under SRA, were added to our beat. I received 3 monthly slum subsidy instalments of 2500 rupees each. Even now I keep calling the KKP KP helpline to ask for work in SWaCH. I'll take my daughter-in-law with me and we will manage between us". There is no doubt that as far as waste collection and related work is concerned Akkabai has enviable curriculum vitae.

"I got along well with my husband, Suresh. He also did bhangar dhanda (itinerant waste buying). Lay jeev lavaycha mazyavar (he was devoted to me). One day, after work, as I returned to pick up my children from my brother's place, my nephew rushed towards us with news about the fight. Suresh had set fire to himself after a fight with his mother. His sister wanted to take him to Sassoon, the government hospital. I flatly refused and took him to Surya, a private hospital, but he had to be shifted out immediately. He died the very next morning. That was way back in 1993". Left alone to fend for herself and her children, Akkabai took her paati (basket) and went back to her dabba batli work. "I was already in the sanghatna (KKPKP) then. No one else came to help, not for food, not for groceries and not for education. We were dirt poor. There were days when I



cooked a quarter kilo of plain rice for the children, fed them and slept on an empty stomach. Somehow, I managed to get my 4 kids to complete class 8 and 9. I got my girls married early. One lives in Yerawada with her electrician husband and children. The other lives close to my house and her husband works in a boot shop. She has worked on a ghanta gadi as a SWaCH collector in the past".

In many ways the shift from Topkhana in the heart of Pune city to Hadapsar, has been a life changer for Akkabai and her family. Almost two years ago the Topkhana vasti was razed to the ground to accommodate the Shivajinagar node of the Pune Metro. Her two sons had separate but adjacent houses at Topkhana so she would sleep in the space between their houses. In the resettlement colony, over 15 km away, she explains, her daughter is on the first floor, one son is on the fifth and she is on the fifteenth floor with her second son. "Both my sons are alcoholics. Good for nothing! Every so often my daughters-in-law threaten to leave, but stick around because I support them financially and otherwise. I tell them that their children must get educated and do well. We will see better days".

"The houses are nice, and we pay 500 rupees a month towards maintenance, but the commute is killing. It is strenuous and expensive because the public bus services are poor, the water supply is uncertain, so we carry drinking water back from Topkhana every day. The shared auto-rickshaw is the only mode of transport and a return fare to the city sets us back by a good 80 rupees. I have to go about my business and ensure that my three grandchildren reach their schools in the old neighborhood so that's a straight additional expense of 80 per head per day. Their admission into private schools was done under the Right to Education Act through KKP KP so we don't have to pay any fees till class VIII for my two grandsons. But I just spent over 3000 rupees on my granddaughter's books. She goes to Modern High School, an English medium school that has demanded 34000 rupees in annual school fees because she is now in class IX! She must grow up and get a job in an office or something. I would be okay if she worked in SWaCH as a coordinator but certainly not in waste collection! She doesn't go onto the road to buy a wada pav for herself, how



MEMBER OF

	Trade Union KKPKP	✓
	SWaCH Cooperative	✓
	SWaCH Plus Cooperative	✗
	Credit cooperative society	✓



SOCIAL SECURITY

Education	Support for children's education, Notebooks, scholarship
Health support	Covered under JAP, PMJJBY, PMJJSY
Credit	Accesses loans from KKPKNSPS



WORK DETAILS

PRIOR WORK	Itinerant waste picking, Itinerant waste buying, SWaCH doorstep collection, SWaCH Slum doorstep collection
CURRENT WORK	Itinerant waste buying
WORKING SINCE	2018
DETAILS	Bulk purchase of consumables like shoes, clothes, utensils, wristwatches from waste pickers, and retail sale at Alpana market
TIMINGS	10 am-8.00 pm, 10 hours including travel
DISTANCE BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND WORKPLACE	15km
MONTHLY INCOME	15000-20000
DAILY WASTE QUANTUM HANDLED	10kgs
TOTAL KKPW WORKERS IN ITINERANT WASTE BUYING	10
LIVELIHOOD POTENTIAL IN PUNE FOR ITINERANT WASTE BUYING JOBS	300



is she going to cope with the hard work that I do? Not that I want her to do it. She is intelligent. I want her to get a job". In Topkhana Akkabai had converted the small space between her sons' houses into a shop, got herself a shop license and rented it out. When they were relocated they were offered little kiosks in exchange but she chose to bargain for compensation instead. Everyone with similar shops got 5-10 lakhs of rupees. She decided to invest that amount in her sons' new homes and bought them refrigerators, beds, sofa sets, curtains and finally televisions from the SWaCH thrift store.

Until a couple of years ago, Akkabai wasn't just a customer at the SWaCH thrift store she was also an enterprise partner. "I used to buy goods in bulk at wholesale rates and Smita who was the manager then, would give me competitive rates so I could then retail and make a tidy profit. Now the items are getting expensive. The rates are okay for self-use or own consumption but not really for us trade's people. I have changed my modus operandi. I go directly to the vastis and buy directly from the waste collectors! All the former SWaCH collectors in Pimpri Chinchwad now work with the contractors. They sell me boots, watches, calculators, mobiles and other goods. If I buy material worth around 20-40 rupees I can sell it for around 70-80 rupees. They are my regulars and keep the goods for me, and call me when there is a substantial quantity. About 40-50 contract workers are regular customers, and I take turns going to their vastis. Each of them gets around 100-400. I end up buying around 2000 rupees worth per day, and manage to make around 800 rupees on it".

"I definitely earn more than 15000 rupees a month in this work and that was comfortable in Topkhana. Now the additional transport costs are prohibitive! My daughter in law is doing some domestic work. To be honest I have never done domestic work or construction work so I wouldn't know where to begin! All my experience is in waste related work. I'm waiting for SWaCH to provide some work in the Hadapsar area, for my daughter in law and me, and contacts of waste collectors nearby who I could buy goods from like I do in Pimpri Chinchwad."



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**I've done every possible kind of work in waste, itinerant waste collection, waste buying, doorstep waste collection, slum waste collection, tempo based waste collection-
I can't envisage any work outside waste**

”



JAYSHREE RAJENDRA OVHAL

AGE	35
GENDER	Female
ADDRESS	Kondhwa
FAMILY	Husband, Son, Daughter

WORK IN PROGRESS

Dark and diminutive Jayshree Rajendra Ovhal speaks with an endearing lisp. At thirty five she manages the SWaCH scrap store at Hadapsar where around 98 waste pickers sell their collected scrap. Her association with the work is relatively new she's been at it for about a year. She remembers being horrified when she realized what her mother's work in waste as a SWaCH collector in Ghorpadi, actually involved. The family had sold vegetables for a living and migrated to Pune from Ahmedagar during the drought in the late '90s. Jayshree had just graduated class X and her father had an intestinal surgery after which he couldn't do heavy work. They lived with his sister for some time but soon felt exploited by her and moved to a rented home. The mother and daughters did all kinds of work, carried sand to construction sites, worked in marriage halls and did domestic work.

The neighbour turned out to be a distant relative with a young eligible son and soon Jayshree was married into that household at Srigonda in the Budhh Melava. Her husband was a graduate who got by with electrical skills.

That was when Mangal, a SWaCH worker had to go to the village to visit her ailing son. Jayshree's mother was taken as a substitute and then continued, as Mangal decided to stay on in the village because her son died. Jayshree's maternal grandparents were relatively well to do brick kiln owners in Ahmednagar but their daughter had never approached them for help even when her husband deserted her, leaving her to care for three children. Jayshree's mother continued to work as a SWaCH collector, hiding, cowering from the husband who periodically turned up to harass her. Rahul Bhagat, the SWaCH coordinator added more work to the two original lanes that her mother was doing.

Meanwhile Jayshree and Rajendra had set up home close to her mother's place at Ganganagar. "Rajendra had always wanted to be a teacher but he was the son of sugarcane cutters, and with five daughters they could not afford to

continue his education. He was the only earning member but we managed somehow. We had two children. His family is very cultured. There was no drinking, abuses or fighting. He knew that I always wanted to study further. When the children were in primary school he got me admitted into class XI and then I cleared class XII. I managed but couldn't speak English properly. My children were in English medium schools. They helped. My son would find words in the dictionary and explain the meanings to me. Then my husband made me join the MSCIT course. He said I could get a job in some shop, in a grocery store where there would be some value for my education. But I got nothing! By then my children were in class 10. They'd take me for interviews. My children taught me how to talk, what to say in the interviews, what I'd be asked and how to answer. I didn't even know how to use a mobile! I would never have thought that I'd actually end up working on a laptop! I would love to learn more. My son is now in class XII and my daughter is in class X. Both kids are bright; while he wants to become a psychologist, she wants to join the navy or become a doctor".

Jayshree is a big support to the families of her two brothers who have unfortunately taken after the father and become abusive alcoholics. One drives a tempo for a gas company while the other does marketing. "The sisters in law are nice and that's why I called my mother to live near me. My brothers are the problem. We have brought their wives into our family and we have to take care of them. I complained to the police against my brother when he beat my sister in law but she withdrew the complaint saying she wants to live with him so what is the point of complaining. I made the police give him strict warnings. Now he doesn't hit her but continues to drink a lot. The brothers' families live in the same house with my mother."

Jayshree gave some interviews and even tried tele-calling but she wasn't able to manage the language. She happened



to meet Rahul, the SWaCH coordinator at her mother's workplace and he asked if she was interested in working at the scrap store because the previous manager had resigned. "I didn't know anyone here, but I showed up for the interview. I told them everything like it was-I'd worked as a receptionist for a few months in a doctor's clinic, that's all. I was asked to sit at the shop for a few days and try it out. Next thing, I was offered the job. It was tough initially but now I've settled into the routine and I manage".

Jayshree opens the shop at 10 every morning. Her first task is to enter the previous day's receipts into Tally and send the reports to her boss. Cash in hand, material flow and any shop related issues are reported. The labourers have been assigned their work for the day, the previous evening itself. They don't always listen to her she quietly confesses "to be honest I am more scared of them than they are of me. I have noticed a lot of change in the way I speak. I have learnt to listen. Once my patience is over, it's over of course, towards the end of the day!"

Jayshree has developed her own ways of dealing with the issues that she has to handle on a daily basis. Members quarrel over rates or if there is no capital to pay them. She listens and softly asks them to return later. If they add messy waste to increase the weight of the scrap, she threatens to reduce the weight the next time and does it too. She says although her mother is a member, she had never interacted with her in the work space. So, she is now seeing her work through their eyes and getting to know the dynamics more closely. She needs to interact with them better.

Jayshree likes the work and believes she is learning a lot from everyone. She learns from the ways in which waste pickers negotiate with her and makes mental notes on how to use the same methods with wholesale traders who buy material from the store. She would like to grow into a higher position in SWaCH. She is pursuing her second year of the Bachelor's degree in the Arts Stream.

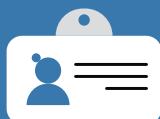
Jayshree is clued in to details about the shop the terms, profit, economics, logistics, operations, systems, purpose and is trying to improve her own skills to run it better. She explains the daily capital requirement is between 15000-35000 rupees per day, sometimes 40000 on Saturdays for purchase of scrap. Last year 6 lakh rupees were distributed as profit at 8 percent. Purchase of material has increased from 2 to 3.5 lakhs per month this year. The shop is stable.

Jayshree has retained a full- size blow moulded plastic skeleton that came in the scrap. "It lights up in the dark. We only did it up", she says, "we put chamki laser in the eyes so that any thief who comes in during the night will get terrified. I try new things each day, I am work in progress. I have a long way to go!"



SOCIAL SECURITY

Covered under Health Insurance, ESI, PF



WORK DETAILS

PRIOR WORK	Domestic work, cleaning work in mangal karyalays
CURRENT WORK	Cooperative scrap shop manager
WORKING SINCE	2022
DETAILS	Purchasing scrap material from SWaCH waste pickers, selling to wholesale traders, managing payment and accounts, managing the workers at the scrap shop, maintaining material and cash inventory and accounts
TIMINGS	10 am-6.00 pm, 8 hours including travel
DISTANCE BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND WORKPLACE	5km
MONTHLY INCOME	15000 including PF, ESI
ANNUAL DIWALI BONUS	As per statutory norms
DAILY WASTE QUANTUM HANDLED	935 kgs of recyclables
TOTAL WORKERS IN SCRAP COOP STORES	15
LIVELIHOOD POTENTIAL IN PUNE FOR SCRAP COOP STORE JOBS	100



 MEMBER OF

	Trade Union KKPKP	
	SWaCH Cooperative	
	SWaCH Plus Cooperative	
	Credit cooperative society	



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I have miles to go before I sleep

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This case study is a part of a collaborative effort of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Swach Pune Cooperative (SWaCH) and the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) under the ILO supported initiative for “Promoting green and decent jobs creation in the waste value chain sector in India [specifically bio-medical, plastic and chemical wastes]”



SHAKUNTALA BABURAO RANDIVE

AGE	60
GENDER	Female
ADDRESS	Wadki
FAMILY	Husband (2 Sons, Daughter and their families live adjacent)

A WOMAN OF FEW WORDS

When the going gets tough the tough get going is a song that sums up Shakuntala's life as she sits in the comfortable three storey house that she has built in Wadki where she lives with her two sons and daughter. Like many of her generation, her journey begins from the drought in Solapur, where she grew up in a wood cutters home among seven illiterate sisters and one brother who completed his class XII. Her mother died when she was nine and soon she was married off to a tailor who had completed class X and was her father's cousin. They were handed a five rupee ticket and put on the train to Pune where his brother lived. In Wadarwadi her brother in law had taught her tailoring. Between him, his wife and Shakuntala, they would earn 150 rupees a week, from a tailoring contractor who filled tenders of the Pune Municipal Corporation. Her husband worked elsewhere. She did not get along with her sister in law, and the birth of her daughter gave her the opportunity to escape the small house in the Wadarwadi slum to go to her village for the delivery. Her husband followed but there was not much tailoring work in the village so they alternated between Pune and the village and Mohol where her in laws lived.

"Meanwhile" she says, "I had six children! After three the situation became so bad, there was no work and we had to perforce move to Pune. I wanted to get a tubectomy done after my son was born but my brother in law had no children so wanted me to have at least two sons. We lived as tenants in Ambegaon and Padmavati on the far eastern edge of Pune city. Times were hard. I did any kind of work that I could. I sold vegetables. I bought thick dahi (curd) and walked around selling it for 10 rupees a quarter. I sold 10-12 kilograms daily. I even broke stones on the highway for a daily wage of 60 rupees! That is how I educated all my children. Each of my girls has completed 10th, 8th, 14th and one did her MBA! One boy has done 12th, and the second didn't clear 10th and so did first year externally. I

got support from the union for my younger boy. The others were older, already studying so didn't benefit. Two of my girls were in a hostel in Rajgurunagar. One studied there. The other took external examinations. Someone from the social welfare department, my husband's customer, helped in that. I used to visit them once a month during the five years that they were there. They were happy there. Then they worked in some software mobile company at Ranjan-gaon and supported me. My husband had no work. We had sold our sewing machines in the village. I took a loan from a malwari (money lender) and bought him one but who would climb up the hill to Shantinagar in Ramtekdi to give him tailoring work?"

Shakuntala and family had moved to the Ramtekdi slum in Hadapsar in 1990 after an invitation from some of her relatives. They put up a shanty and she started accompanying the waste pickers on their beat to the Ramtekdi landfill. For two months she couldn't stand the filth, the flies and the smell and threw up regularly. During her early forays, the ones who were already there wouldn't let her in. She used to hide behind her neighbours and collect waste. Her twelve-hour work day would start at 6 in the morning and continue till 6 in the evening and fetch her 90 to 100 rupees at Londhe's or Vaijnath's, where she sold scrap. Sun, rain, weekends or holidays, nothing mattered. She was at work 365 days of the year. A couple of years later, the municipal vehicles stopped coming to Ramtekdi and started dumping at the Uruli landfill. She worked there for eight years from 8 in the morning to 6 in the evening. There were no vehicles that would agree to take them so the waste pickers had to carry heavy loads on their heads till they found some means of transport. The earnings were good though, between 300 and 400 a day.

Shakuntala was working at the landfill when the unionising of waste pickers started. She says, "most of the women didn't want identity cards. They were apprehensive. I was



not frightened. I thought it would help my children so I started convincing the others. Then one day when I was returning from the landfill in the big new PMC vehicles, the brake failed and the driver jumped off to put a stone under it to break the momentum. I got scared and also jumped off. I was perched on top of the vehicle. I fell on my knee and hurt my leg. I was heavy and so it was a bad injury. I couldn't work for 2 months but after that I stopped going to the landfill altogether. My daughter Swati who used to come with me earlier, continued going to Uruli with my mother in law".

By that time the effort to integrate waste pickers in door to door collection of waste was under way. Two activists from KKP KP, Mangal and Vidya were telling waste picker members to approach housing societies. Vidya asked Shakuntala to start working at Camilla Society in Wanavdi but she didn't have the money to travel there. So she was assigned Salunkhe Vihar, an army officers complex where she continued to work for thirteen years. She and a colleague had to cover 66 households in three buildings and 11 households in another for which they were paid 1 rupee per household for gate collection and later 2 for doorstep collection. The scrap was good, and they sold it daily. They got 300 rupees every other day for the scrap. As the occupancy of the colony increased, so did the scrap. Initially they had no place to store the scrap but later they established contacts and were given some place. They started work at 8 am and finished by noon. She worked there for thirteen long years! Unfortunately, her seven month old granddaughter had a hole in the heart and had to undergo major surgery. "I was never one to take leave" she says, "but in this case I had no choice. I gave Laxmi Dolare as a replacement collector and she never left! The coordinator Kamble made her permanent! In fact, the colony gave me money for my granddaughter's operation, through their club. Now she is in class IV, my granddaughter". After that Shakuntala was allocated work in the police lines but that was not as lucrative as Salunkhe Vihar because the households used to sell bottles, tins, milk bags and other scrap material themselves. Her next opportunity was in Shevalewadi where she collected waste from a building that had ten floors. The monthly user

fee was 7000 rupees and there was a lot of scrap material as well, but they lost the work to a contractor after three years. For the past four years, she has been working in the Swach Plus MLP warehouse at Wadki where she gets a monthly salary of 15000 rupees plus provident fund and ESIC (employees state insurance) benefits. Her husband's surgery was covered under the ESI. The work is not heavy and she is able to manage. Her son Prasad is employed with Swach Plus, in fact as the manager of the warehouse where she works! She says, "Two of my children, Prasad and Swati are in waste work and I like it. After all he is what he is because of waste. It is the waste and the work around it that has fed and educated them so why forget the waste. I am happy that we are in it".

"All my children are settled now. My daughter Swati is in IBM. She sorts waste there. The older one lives in Kolhapur and does stitching. Her husband does construction. The third lives with her mother in law, after her husband died of jaundice. The fourth is an MBA and lives in Dhayri. She used to work in a printing press but now she and her husband print T shirts for a company. My elder son has a permanent job in Tata Honeywell. I don't know his salary but he gives me money. He is married to my brother's daughter. My younger son Prasad is married to another relative. He used to work in a gym but lost his job when he returned late from a wedding".

Shakuntala bought 1000 sq ft of land in Wadki in 2009 for 3.5 lakhs and split it with her daughter Swati. She constructed incrementally. Her older son was the first to move in with his wife. The rest moved in three years ago. There are a total of six apartments each measuring 500 sq ft, on either side. Three belong to Shakuntala and three to Swati. Shakuntala's two sons live on two floors and she occupies the top. The sons have made a bedroom and a living room but she has retained one large room so that her daughters can come to visit. All the homes are fully equipped with refrigerator, television, fans. She has retained the house in Ramtekdi in the hope that there will be a slum rehabilitation scheme and she will get a flat. She's come a long way from the bamboo shanty they put together in Shantinagar, Ramtekdi, over twenty years ago.

MEMBER OF		
KKPK	Trade Union KKPK	✓
SWaCH <small>A higher level of self-reliance</small>	SWaCH Cooperative	✓
SWaCH Plus <small>A higher level of self-reliance</small>	SWaCH Plus Cooperative	✗
	Credit cooperative society	✓



WORK DETAILS

PRIOR WORK	Selling vegetables, selling curd, breaking stones in a quarry, itinerant waste picking at landfill, doorstep waste collection
CURRENT WORK	Sorter at warehouse managed by SWaCH for Multi Layer Plastic waste
WORKING SINCE	2020
DETAILS	Sorting and baling various types of flexible plastic
TIMINGS	9 am-5.30 pm, 9.5 hours including travel time
DISTANCE BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND WORKPLACE	1km
MONTHLY INCOME	15000 including PF, ESI
ANNUAL DIWALI BONUS	As per statutory norms
DAILY WASTE QUANTUM HANDLED	250 kgs of multi-layer flexible plastic
CURRENT LIVELIHOODS IN PLASTIC SORTING	20
LIVELIHOOD POTENTIAL IN PUNE FOR PLASTIC WASTE SORTING	300



"My husband struggles to climb to the top floor but manages and doesn't come down regularly. He has cellulitis. He had to have major surgery and also an angioplasty. I couldn't bear to see his leg because they had to cut away flesh. The cost for just the bandaging of his leg was 700 rupees a day so my son learnt how to do it. He got the plaster and we did it at home and took him once a week to get it checked. With the children around I was scared that something would hit him by mistake so I got the top floor built. Now I also have pain in the hip and back. Last week I had severe stomach-ache so I went to the village doctor and I also went to Sane Guruji Hospital. I don't like to get admitted because I have to take care of my husband. He has no one. No parents, no siblings. He has only his children. So lay jeev ahe (I love him). I don't know if he has as much jeev in me but that's okay. I have many sisters, my girls and boys ask after me. He has no one. He speaks well to the kids. When they were in school and didn't want to go, he would tell them not to mix with the other children. He opened bank accounts for them and said don't give us the money but put it in your bank accounts. The girls used to give me money that they had saved. That's how I managed. He would encourage them to save. That's why my children are so disciplined".



SOCIAL SECURITY

Education	Support for childrens education, loans, Notebooks, scholarship
Health support	Insurance cover through JAP, PMJJBY, PMJJSY
Credit	Saves money and accesses loans from KKPKNSPS

Shakuntala thinks her situation is better than that of her sisters. Her children are married to relatives and she thinks it is simpler to manage because they get along. Her entire family, siblings and her children do not drink or womanise. They take care of their families and lead disciplined lives.

"Go see my house", she says, "I tell everyone relatives, friends, neighbours, that everything of mine is with the sanghatna. I have relatives, my husband doesn't but more importantly, I have the sanghatna. Sanghatnechya jeevavar udi marte me (I dance because of the sanghatna)".



“

I am blessed- I have family- siblings, children- and then I have the whole Sanghatana.

”



SHUBANGI SHANKAR KHANDEL

AGE	40
GENDER	Female
ADDRESS	Wadki, Hadapsar
FAMILY	Husband, Son, Daughter

WORKPLACE SERENDIPITY

Shankar Khandale and Anand Gaikwad were colleagues at Jaihind Cloth Stores. Shankar didn't like the work at the cloth store, a twelve-hour day where he was continuously on his feet, and the paltry 10000 rupees he received as wages. Anand had completed his class XII and was continuing his education, and he left to join SWaCH as a coordinator. Shankar was not eligible as he had not even completed class X. Anand suggested that he join SWaCH as a door-to-door waste collector and offered to show him the work. He recalls the conversation with Ashwini, the senior coordinator, "You didn't look like someone who would continue this work but I asked to be given a chance. The workplace was Dhole Patil road, while I lived with my parents and wife Shubhangi, at Gultekdi Market Yard 8 km away. I did it for a week, felt sick, I couldn't eat! My work at Jaihind was so different, my clothes wouldn't even get dusty. I had earned only 3000 rupees but I was back home in three hours! Soon, I got used to it so I asked for more work because I needed to earn more. As the work increased, I couldn't manage it alone and needed a companion".

At the time Shubhangi was a domestic worker earning around 5000 rupees a month. Her children accompanied her to work. She had no choice, her in laws were deceased and she had no other support systems. Now her 16 year old son, studies in class X while the girl is 14 and in class IX. Shubhangi had spent her growing years in Pune accompanying her mother for domestic work till she was married at 19. Her father was an itinerant waste buyer, so the family was familiar with the nature of the scrap business but they never had the experience of itinerant waste collection. "Seven years back Shankar asked me to join him in his work at Tadiwalla road slum saying it would pay more than domestic work. I agreed to try it. We had around 800 houses each. I earned 1500 to 2000 rupees in a month. The amount dropped during the pandemic because the slum dwellers themselves had lost work and were struggling. We

had the promise of the subsidy for collection from slums so we continued". Shubhangi pauses and Shankar intervenes, "We decided to sell the house in Market Yard. We got 2.1 lakhs, paid off all our debts and shifted to a rented place in far off Loni. I used to travel by train. Anand assured us that the slum subsidy would be released by PMC. I was not earning much more than I was earlier, and there was no sign of the subsidy, so I kept accusing Anand of lying. Finally, after one year I got a cheque of 50000 rupees. That was the tipping point! Shubhangi said this is good, let us do this work".

Shubhangi recounts "Times were so hard, we had to literally worry about the next meal. Domestic work was brutal and we never managed to save. I fell ill and was admitted in hospital so many times with high blood pressure. Yet, I was hesitant to get into this. I would ask Shankar why he left a good job to work in waste! The first few days I couldn't eat after work! Anand insisted saying, "Vahini don't give up, continue! They say God appears to everyone in some form or the other. For us it was Anand. I persisted and now, I earn more, it's regular and the work is good. I like it. This work doesn't feel heavy or difficult. I won't leave this work. I'll work as long as I can.

I don't want my children to do this though as they have different aspirations. They study in Sadhana Vidyalaya. They get notebooks, scholarships from KKP KP. My son wants to be an artist, and my daughter wants to do modelling and fashion design. Shankar and I strongly believe their dreams are our own. So, we will encourage them. Not that, they should not work in waste. I have no problem if they do work in SWaCH of course. My brother too works as a SWaCH collector, far away in Karve Road area, and we swap stories when we meet".

"Shankar and I leave at 6.15 on the bike and we reach at 7 sharp. He drives. I want to learn but it's a long drive from Wadki and I'm a little nervous. I wake up at 4 am, make



packed lunches for everyone, have tea and leave. We start with Tadiwala road slum, where we have 350 households each to collect waste from, which gets done in about 2-2.5 hours. At least 200 houses pay 30-40 rupees per month and now we get the increased slum subsidy of rupees 20 per month. Then we go to the housing societies. We have about 5 societies, each with about 20 houses that pay 80 rupees each per month". The husband wife team also sweeps and swabs two of the buildings, for which they get paid another 9000 rupees per month. Shubhangi finds housekeeping the least enjoyable and says it's too much work for too little money. They make another 1500 rupees a week from the sale of scrap.

They finish work in this pocket by about 2 and then head to the Pune Divisional Commissioner's Office, where they work for an hour at the modular biogas plant installed near the canteen. They collect 50 kg of organic waste from the canteen, put it in the plant, press it in. They also periodically check PH levels and the meter to see how much gas is generated and how much is used. Till now they were being paid 6000 rupees a month by SWaCH for this work which takes about an hour, but henceforth the canteen will be paying them, based upon the gas generated. An estimated 5000 litres is generated from 50 kg so the amount that they will earn will depend on the gas generated. The plant has a capacity of 100 kg per day so the total gas generated will go up as the input increases. They will get paid 75% of the cost of the gas which will likely work out to around 7000-8000 rupees per month. If the quantum of organic waste goes up, so will the gas generated, and their earnings.

The pride and sense of achievement in Shubhangi's voice is palpable when she says, "we lost our house but we bought a 350 sq ft flat worth 13.5 lakhs under PMAY (Prime Ministers Housing Scheme). SWaCH gave us letters certifying how much we earned. We made a down payment of 1.11 lakhs to the builder after saving the slum subsidy and within a year we got the PMAY interest subsidy of 2.67 lakhs from the Punjab National Bank. That reduced our loan repayment installment from 14000 to 11000 rupees a month, over a 20-year period. Our building has a lift and other amenities, and our children's school is just half an hour away.

	Trade Union KKPKP	
	SWaCH Cooperative	
	SWaCH Plus Cooperative	
	Credit cooperative society	

	SOCIAL SECURITY
Education	Support for childrens education, loans, Notebooks, scholarship
Health support	Covered under JAP, PMJJBY, PMJJSY
Credit	Accesses loans through KKPKNSPS



WORK DETAILS

PRIOR WORK	Domestic work
CURRENT WORK	Slum and society doorstep waste collection, housekeeping, biogas plant management
WORKING SINCE	2016
DETAILS	50 households slum doorstep waste collection, 80 households doorstep waste collection, 1 building housekeeping, 100 kg capacity biogas plant management
TIMINGS	6.15 am-3.45 pm 9.5 hours including 2 hours travel time
DISTANCE BETWEEN RESIDENCE AND WORKPLACE	18km
MONTHLY INCOME	25000 4000 slum user fee cash, 7000 slum subsidy cheque, 4000 user fee cash, 4500 housekeeping, 3000 scrap sale cash, 3000 Biogas Plant management
ANNUAL DIWALI BONUS	Equal to monthly salary
WASTE COLLECTION	430 Households
DAILY WASTE QUANTUM HANDLED	430 kgs wet & dry waste, 50 kgs organic processed
GHG EMISSIONS REDUCED (Metric Tonnes Co2E)	28
TOTAL WORKERS CURRENTLY IN SYSTEM	3700
TOTAL POSSIBLE IN PUNE	7000
TOTAL POSSIBLE IN INDIA	10+ Lakh
LIVELIHOOD POTENTIAL IN PUNE FOR BIOGAS PLANT MANAGEMENT	585



The other residents are informal sector workers like vendors and auto-rickshaw drivers. The house is very good quality and we are happy even though it is a little far away from our workplace. The slum subsidy though delayed, is like a saving. We have used it to buy our TV, refrigerator, two-wheeler. Only a washing machine is left, and we should get one, as I was telling Shankar the other day".

LIVELIHOOD POTENTIAL IN INDIA FOR BIOGAS PLANT MANAGEMENT

60000

Shubhangi and Shankar have very cordial relationships with their ‘customers’ as they refer to them. “They’re friendly and we are comfortable asking for tea in their houses, both in the building and in the slum. They all came by rikshaws

from Tadiwala road for our house warming, bringing, clothes, gold beads, money as gifts. They don’t want us to leave the work. They appreciate our hard work. They see the money but they also see us struggle, and recognise our hard work is rewarded”.



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**They say God appears in many forms-
to me He took Anand’s-
The coordinator- who integrated us into SWaCH**

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Promoting Green And Decent Jobs Creation In The Waste Value Chain Sector

