



A STUDY OF ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF WASTE PICKERS IN PUNE

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Abstract: After independence, position of women in India has improved significantly. Today women are working on top most position in almost all the sectors. These changes are due to spread of education, change in the socio- economic environment, high demand for luxurious goods and many other factors. However there are some groups or people who are still trying hard to fulfilling their basic needs. The people who are poor ,illiterate and do not have any work at their native place move towards cities in search of jobs but due to their illiteracy and lack of skill they do not get jobs in organized sector they start working as a domestic servants, construction workers, rag pickers etc. This study is carried out in Pune as it is one of the developed and many industries are located here. This paper focus on economic aspects of waste pickers.

Key Words: Waste Pickers, Income, Economic aspect .

Introduction

After independence, position of women in India has improved significantly. Today women are working on top position in almost all the sectors. These changes are due to spread of education, change in the socio- economic environment, high demand for luxurious goods and many other factors. However, women those who are not educated or illiterate and poor find it difficult to get jobs. When these women do not find any job in companies or any organization they start working as a domestic servants, construction workers, rag pickers etc. They have low

standard and status in society . This paper focus on the economic aspect of waste pickers who are poor ,illiterate and have no respect in society.

Waste Picker – Oh my God ! – it’s the first word uttered by any person when he or she think, listen , talk or see a waste Picker . The name itself represents a clear picture about the waste pickers , who are always busy in searching recyclable waste . These people are neglected by the society. They make significant contribution to the society by collecting waste from roadside, commercial complex, parks , waste bins etc. They collect waste from the waste bins, streets and other public places , without hesitating for a single minute. It raises a question regarding what may be their income , expenses and how do they manage their family and hence motivated researcher to find out the economic aspects of waste pickers.

Aim of the Study:

To study the economic aspects of the waste pickers in Pune area.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

It is a ‘descriptive research’. The researcher has described the economic aspects of waste pickers in Pune area. Descriptive research includes survey using a questionnaire and fact finding inquiries of different kinds. The major purpose of descriptive research to give a description of the state of affairs as it exists at the time of the survey.¹

Sources of Data.

Primary and secondary data sources were used by the researcher to collect information about the waste pickers in Pune area.

Primary data

- a) Information was collected from 50 waste pickers by using questionnaire .

Secondary Data

Secondary data is collected from books, government reports, research work , journals and articles related to waste pickers and union of waste pickers in Pune.

Selection of Samples

The researcher has used simple random sampling design for the study of waste pickers in Pune

Population

Population is taken to be the total number of waste pickers in Pune. However the actual number of total waste pickers is not known. According to a study conducted by Poornima Chikarmane and Lakshmi Narain,(2000) the estimated number of the people dealing in waste materials as 7000, of which waste pickers constitute 85 percent and itinerant buyers constitute 15 percent. It is further estimated that over 90% of waste pickers are women²

Definition of 'waste picker':-

The definition of 'waste picker according to the ILO-SNDT Report, 2001, is: A 'waste picker' is a scrap collector who engages in free collection of recyclable scrap from garbage bins, roads, homes, offices, hotels, hospitals and land fill sites for sale in the market. These persons can be distinguished from 'Itinerant Waste Buyers' who are scrap collectors who collect small quantities of recyclable scrap from households and shops/offices/hospitals/hotels and other commercial establishments in exchange for cash or kind.³ Earlier studies reveal that most of the waste pickers had migrated in search of jobs and due to natural calamities. Most of the waste pickers are migrants from the district of Solapur and the Marathwada region.⁴ They are Dalits, the erstwhile 'untouchable' castes, more specifically the Mahar and Matang Caste⁵

Review of Literature

Chaudhary, Bikramaditya,(2002)

The author describes about the economics of waste picking by collecting data from 100

waste pickers,10 dealers, and 5 wholesalers from Delhi. He finds that most of the waste pickers are from age group of 15 to 29 years. He finds that the economic status of the waste-pickers is directly linked with their working hours . Dealers did not pay the appropriate amount to children due to their unawareness about the prevailing market price. On an average 20 to 25 Kilograms of recyclable waste is collected by a waste picker and generally earn about Rs.62.50 per day and there is direct relationship between the age of a waste-picker and his/her daily income. ⁶

ILO-SNDT Report 2001

Poornima Chikarmane, Medha Deshpande and Laxmi Narayan found that scrap collectors are dalit and migrants form Solapur and Marathwada. They work about 10 hours per day, covering a distance of up to 12 kms per day with head loads of up to 40 kgs .Their daily earning is about Rs 50. The collective earning of scrap collectors is about Rs. 3, 00,000 per day in Pune and Pimpri chinchwad area. each waste-picker actually contributes Rs. 246 in the form of unpaid labour to the two municipalities every month . It saves Rs.8,910,891 per annum for both Municipal corporation⁷.

A Case Study of KKP KP, 2004

Poornima Chickermane and Laxmi Narayan, reveals that Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (KKPKP) union was started in 1993 under the guidance of Dr Baba Adhav, President of the Hamal Panchayat . Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Corporations became the first in India to officially recognize waste Pickers and provides Identity cards to them .It protects them from exploitation by Police and other civilions.This union has started many schemes for waste pickers like establishment of 'Kashtachi Kamai' a cooperative scrap store under Pimpri Railway bridge,it purchase waste from waste pickers and give reasonable price to them. It also started Samudayik Vivah Solah' or Community Wedding Celebration.A door to door waste collection programme was started in Pune by the KKP KP in 2005 ⁸ .

Findings**Personal Information**

- It was found that most of the waste pickers are women between 25-45 years of age, majority of them are migrant from solapur .

- (62%) of them are matang, (26%) Mang and (22%) Budhdhist . 94% of them are illiterate.
- Most of them(94%) of the waste pickers are female only 6% are male it shows that this profession is dominated by female .

Economic Aspect

- 72% of waste pickers covers distance between 8-10 Km per day , 20% covers 10-12 km per day and 4% of them collects waste from 6-8 km per day.
- 68% of the waste pickers collects 10-12 kg recyclable waste per day, 22% of them collect 8-10 kg waste and 10 % of them collect 6-8 Kg recyclable waste per day.
- 68% of the waste pickers sad that they earn Rs. 100-150 per day, 24% said they earn above Rs. 150/- per day, 8% said they earn less than 100/- per day.
- 92% of them said that the they have taken loan. Out of which 56% have not repaid loan amount whereas 36% have paid the loan (92% is considered as 100 %).
- 56% have taken loan to fulfill their household purpose, 28% have taken loan for marriage purpose and 12% have taken for other reason.
- All of them are aware of interest rates charged by the lender.
- 88% have taken loan from shop keepers,12% have taken from other sources like friends and relatives.
- 98% of them said that they attends all the functions and other festivals. It shows that even if they do not earn sufficient amount for their livelihood they try to enjoy their life.

Limitations: It was felt that during survey waste pickers were thinking that researcher is a government authority and they might get some economic assistance hence were not ready to disclose their earning.

Conclusion: Waste pickers are the deprived people in the society and have low status in

the society. It can be said that they work hard to fulfill their daily needs. As far as economic aspects are concern they earn very less and most of them have borrow money to fulfill their basic needs. They collects waste from the streets and garbage bins and keeps our city clean . It is their source of livelihood. Government must do something for these poor people so that they can earn and live with dignity in society.

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