

Social Entrepreneurs in the Waste Business

By JUSCO | Category: Implemented Innovations

Jamshedpur, like any other city, has informal waste pickers scavenging waste for their livelihood. JUSCO sought out to pick them up from squalor and transform them into professional service providers and social entrepreneurs. Through this project, JUSCO recognised around 428 waste-pickers in and around Jamshedpur and so far, integrated 210 waste pickers into a solid waste management system. JUSCO then trained them to provide door-to-door collection of source segregated waste (i.e. 2 bins - 1 bag concept).



The Context

- Littering of waste in back alleys, drains, main roads and open dumps by residents causing unhygienic living conditions
- Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 - establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish a system for integration of these authorised waste pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management
- To develop the above process, JUSCO visited many cities and after rigorous research, the team decided to integrate waste pickers for efficient solid waste management and simultaneously give them an opportunity to uplift their livelihood
- After several brainstorming sessions, the team put together all the fragments (JUSCO's role in city management, solid waste management guidelines, and integration of waste pickers) and innovated a "Self-sustainable entrepreneurship model"

Impact of the Innovation
 converting waste pickers into social entrepreneurs



The Innovation

Multiple parallel steps were undertaken by the team to execute the innovative "Self-sustainable entrepreneurship model"

- An enumeration drive was organised to identify the number of waste-pickers in the city, to understand the social and economic status of waste-pickers.
- JUSCO developed a system of issuing Occupational Identity Cards from the appropriate authority (Dist. Commissioner, East Singhbhum), which provided them access to social security benefits granted by the Indian Government (e.g. Aadhar Card, PAN Card, Bank A/c).
- The waste pickers, now social entrepreneurs, were made into teams of seven members in which, one was the team leader with whom the work order would be placed for door-to-door collection and the remaining are team members.
- A pilot study was undertaken that included 1500 households of the ECC flat complex, 500 households of farm area, Kadma and 400 establishments in Kadma Market. This study was organised to assess the possible bottle necks, customer acceptance and the scalability of this model in future.

Based on the pilot study 427 social entrepreneurs will be required to scale up for all of Jamshedpur. Presently, 210 social entrepreneurs are engaged to cover 35,353 households segregated waste door-to-door.



Overcoming Challenges

The study revealed that waste pickers are not concerned either about their health, hygiene/well-being of their children or saving any percentage of their earning. There was no initial appreciation from them when the JUSCO team approached with enumeration drive. In order to tackle this, a number of counselling sessions were conducted to get their first buy in. The team spoke to the ladies highlighting that they needed to educate their children and how some saving for future would help them. Further the team also conducted sessions on the importance of health and hygiene which is completely missing as their work is primarily scavenging. It was very difficult to explain and get the buy in for the same from the men who used a large part of their small earning in bad habits such as drinking alcohol and drugs. To bring the reality several health camps were conducted and showed the risk of their health.