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150 women to be trained under PCMC's new waste collection scheme

Dipannita Das, TNN, Apr 22, 2010, 07.52am IST PUNE: Don't be surprised if one day a group of young women drives up to your house in a rickshaw and collects your garbage. These women are the children of waste-pickers and are being trained by the Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) in the collection, segregation and disposal of solid waste generated in homes and small commercial establishments.

The project is part of the new decentralised model being adopted by the PCMC as part of door-to-door collection.

Laxmi Narayan, general-secretary of the Kagad Kach Patra Kahstakari Panchayat (KKPKP), an association of waste-pickers to which the women belong, told TOI that the training of the women, all in the age group of 18 to 25, is funded by PCMC under its poverty alleviation scheme. These women are taught how to drive by a driving agency. Some 150 women will be trained in driving.

There are more than 3 lakh households in the PCMC areas and around 600 metric tonnes of waste is generated per day.

At present, 50-55% of the garbage is collected. This new model was suggested by the KKPKP and Swachh Pune, in order ensure 100% collection and facilitate the process.

Sakina Bahora of the KKPKP said that one autorikshaw will collect garbage from 1,650 households every day. Every vehicle will have a driver and two waste-pickers. In the first phase, 116 autorikshaws will cover wards A and D of the PCMC. Later, after the system is in place, it will be taken up in wards B and C.

In the new model, garbage will be segregated. Wet waste will go to the landfill and dry waste for recycling. It will involve a user charge from citizens. By the fifth year, it will be zero cost to the PCMC, said Bahora.

K Nagkumar, PCMC medical officer, said that the system will start in June. The training of women drivers has been started. 150 vehicles will be used for the purpose.

The ministry of urban development under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) has approved the model. Half of the project cost will be funded by the central government, 25% by the state government and 30% by the corporation, he said.

"There will be no manual handling. Compactors (a machine used to reduce the size of waste material or soil through compaction) will also be used. The idea is to stop manual unloading of the garbage and improve the standard of living of waste-pickers. Tata Motors is providing the chassis and the hoppers will be provided by the Maharashtra State Development Corporation," Nagkumar added.