

# PARYAVARAN MITRA

(Friends of Environment)

**Rampir No Tekro**, opposite **Gandhi Ashram**, is a community of thousands of **'Paryavaran Mitras (PM)'** (Rag Picking Women). They have been involved in solid waste collection (paper, plastic etc.) for ages and work in extremely unhygienic conditions for meager pay and minimal social recognition. Also, these women are under the burden of monetary debt to the Kabaadiwalas (middlemen), and consequently are routinely exploited by them. Then, there is also the stigma associated with their job. Their work is often looked down upon by society, partly because they are working in an unorganized sector and partly because their work is itself considered menial.



Based on the outcome of a yearlong in-depth study done by students of IRMA, ManavSadhna came up with a business model to improve the conditions of PMs in a holistic manner—one that addresses their social, economic, and health issues. This project was launched on 13<sup>th</sup> Nov 2014. As these women are doing great service to Society and moreover to the Environment, the project has been named as **'Paryavaran Mitra'**.



As of now, we have established two facilities. The 1<sup>st</sup> facility is named as 'Peehar' (Mother's home) serves as a waste collection center, where PMs come and sell their collected & sorted waste to us. Along with greeting them with a smile and asking them to sit, the first thing we do when a PM comes to our facility is to serve them with a cold energy drink to supplement their nutritional needs. More importantly, this gesture conveys due respect and aims to indicate that we hold them in high esteem.



After collecting the waste, our team segregates the purchased wastes to finer level and bails them for effective transport. Since, we are directly selling to end users bypassing middlemen, we get good margin. The net profit of each quarter is shared with PMs in the form of good quality grocery. We have the dedicated software (developed free of cost by R. D. Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.) for maintaining all the transactions in a digital form.



Using the software, after analysis we share the profit among them in the ratio of business each PM has given to us. This methodology of profit sharing encourages those who are working harder and motivates others to do the same.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> facility named as Mosal (Uncle's Home) is solely aimed at providing PMs a common space to sort their collected waste before selling it off to middlemen. Currently, they do the sorting in their home, so we aim to provide them with this space to keep their home clean and hygienic. Along with a clinic and a one-stop shop for women, this space also has toilets and bathrooms made for sisters to freshen up after they are finished working.



With an aim of giving PMs an extra moment of smile and happiness, we weekly organize Saturday special event for them. The event not only consists of fun activities such as games, dancing, singing etc., but also informational sessions by our esteemed guests from diverse fields on the topics useful for PMs like value chain of waste management, how to minimize the joint pains, what is the best diet for them etc.. Each of these events ends with a

nutritional snack for all the participants.

On Health side, in collaboration with GCS hospital, each of our PMs undergo end-to-end body checkup. The idea is to make sure that they are not suffering from any diseases. Proper follow is done by our devoted health team. Moreover, regular consultation camps are organized based on the need of the community.

So, overall we work with complete purity making sure that each aspect of a PM's life is improved in our capacity. Love and Respect are the two most important things which we give to these unsung heroes of our society.