

The story of the Green Warriors

-Virat Rajput



“Earning of livelihood by following some profession is better than living on charity”, probably

these women might have heard or read these lines somewhere around the corner, and they decided since then not to ask for charity and rather work for themselves. We, the so called **“well educated”** class of people, being very busy in this fast forward world, often ignore the people who actually work much harder, but live their lives on a much lesser wage.

It’s 5 AM in the clock, wind can still be heard fizzling, the fog is just on its way to home and the dawn about to break, this is the time just when the buzzer in the clock rings ripping off the peaceful silence which we usually enjoy a lot laying on our beds every day. She wakes up, follows her daily morning customs which usually a typical Indian women follows. Just when the clock ticks around 8 o’clock, she starts filling up her tiffin, thanks god for the day, picks up her apron and her safety gloves, locks the door, puts on her shoes and leaves for the day, just as same as a corporate lady would have done.

While waiting for the Auto-rickshaw at the stop, the smile on her face when she talks to her other



*Marathe Maushi (left) with her colleague
Suman Shinde*

peers, is just amazing and would inspire you a lot. This is the story of *Sharda Marathe*, often called by the name **“Marathe Maushi”** (Aunty) and many other such women at **Ranjangaon Waste Processing Centre** who work as the Green Warriors and do the work of secondary waste segregation of daily MSW collected from the village. People often ask her, what motivates you to work at a place like a waste processing centre where nobody would even want to pass by? For which she answers, *“It is a waste processing centre for you, but it is a workplace for someone like me, and I worship it similarly as a corporate would have*

worshipped his cubicle, because it gives me an earning”. *Marathe Maushi* shows how strong determination and self-respect can make you achieve things in life. While narrating her past life, when she worked as a daily wage labourer in farms, one can feel the pain she hides behind her smile

and the way she jokingly describes the part of her current work are totally amazing and would make you to sit down and listen to her with eagerness.

Like most of us, she too gets frustrated at her workplace sometimes, most likely when she finds waste collected by the vehicle is not segregated into wet and dry properly. She then has to put her hands, risking her health and her life, in rotting food waste, which sometimes, has worms in it. Even, baby napkins, hospital waste which has materials like used syringes and sanitary pads and then, to be it worse, she also finds sometimes corpse of animals died in accidents. How inhuman can someone be while doing so?

Do we truly have a right to call ourselves educated when we do such practices at our home? Why can't we separate our own waste into dry and wet and make lives of such *Marathe Maushis* more liveable? We, while going to our offices, pass by many such women daily, but do we have the courage to pull over for a minute, hop out from our vehicle and say them that today I might have reduced a burden of one house from your shoulder because I have segregated my waste?

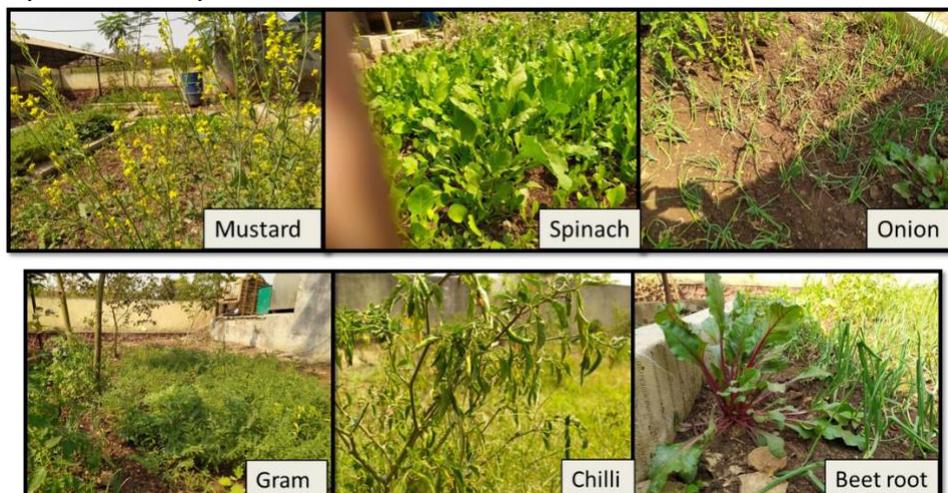


Tomatoes harvested from kitchen garden at Waste Processing centre

The hard work of these women have turned the once barren, stinky land full of waste into a green vegetable garden where one can see plants of tomatoes, chilli, spinach, brinjal and many such healthy and organic veggies. The wet waste which is collected is turned into healthy compost and used in these gardens as well as sale off. These women are real warriors who have taken up the initiative of turning waste to wealth literally.

Next time you give out your waste to the vehicle, do remember, out there, is **Marathe Maushi** on her way to the Waste collection centre, which you might not know personally, but you may be one of the reasons she might end up losing her life in a hospital, just because you did not bother segregating your waste!!!

And last but not least, we, the members of **FINISH Society**, are proud that we play a small role in enhancing lives of such *Marathe Maushis* at *Ranjangaon under a Solid Waste Management project funded and supported by ITC Mission Sunehra Kal, Zila Parishad Pune and Gram Panchayat Ranjangaon, Pune District, Maharashtra.*



Some veggies grown at Waste Processing centre