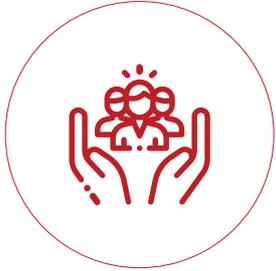


# A Pathway to Respect, Identity, Dignity and Empowerment:

## Unpacking perceptions about informal waste pickers in Bengaluru

Key Insights from BBC Media Action formative research



For most people in Bengaluru, there is a lack of awareness and recognition of the “humans” behind the process of waste management. Even though waste on the streets is visible and of concern, informal waste pickers are virtually 'invisible' to most people.



For most people in Bengaluru, waste management is limited to segregation of waste into dry and wet bins, with negligible understanding of the more invisible parts of the process (such as sorting and recycling).



While people in Bengaluru are generally thankful towards formal waste collectors, there is a high degree of stigma against informal waste pickers, with people talking about their poor physical appearance, lack of education, problems with addictions and homelessness, and a fear of diseases being spread by informal waste pickers.



Informal waste pickers report being discriminated against by the general population because of the nature of their work. They said that they sometimes avoid people in order to escape harassment, encouraging their own 'invisibility' as a way of dealing with discrimination, bullying and fear for their own safety.



There are existing hierarchies in the waste management system: Dry waste collection centre sorters are slightly more formalised than street waste collectors. This hierarchy adds to the invisibility of informal waste pickers, with street waste collectors being the most vulnerable.

# A Pathway to Respect, Identity, Dignity and Empowerment:

## Unpacking perceptions about informal waste pickers in Bengaluru

### BACKGROUND

BBC Media Action is the international charity of the BBC, that uses media and communication to inform, connect and inspire people around the world. As a part of Saamuhika Shakti, BBC Media Action's project – A Pathway to Respect, Identity, Dignity and Empowerment (PRIDE) - aims to shift perceptions about waste picking and informal waste pickers in the city of Bengaluru. Using a human centred design approach, BBC Media Action's work is rooted in evidence, powered by insights, and leverages impact-tested, scalable, big ideas to create social and behaviour change.

BBC Media Action commissioned a formative research study between July-September 2020, to understand current perceptions of the waste picker community among the people of Bengaluru, and the challenges that waste pickers. Following a robust procurement process, Karvy Insights was selected to work with BBC Media Action's research team on this formative research.

### METHODOLOGY

The research used a mixed methods approach with initial online qualitative research followed by a quantitative online survey. Overall, there were 56 qualitative activities including focus-group discussions (with general populations) and in-depth interviews (with waste management practitioners and waste-pickers). The research also included 406 online surveys with social media users in Bengaluru. All research was conducted remotely using telephonic/ video interactions. All ethical requirements including IRB approval and ensuring robust data protection protocols were followed.

**56**  
**QUALITATIVE**  
**ACTIVITIES**

**406**  
**ONLINE SURVEYS**  
**WITH SOCIAL MEDIA USERS**