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Public Perception Regarding the Role of Harithakarma Sena in Waste Management at Panchayat Level

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Abstract: ***The study looks into how well Haritha karma sena has contributed to the waste management and sustainable development. Kudumbasree mission of the Kerala Government has started the Harithakarma sena as a way to eradicate poverty and facilitate women empowerment throughout the state. This initiative was formed in response to the waste management crisis in Kerala and it aids in the promotion of sustainable waste management practise at the grassroot level. This study is a tool to understand the perception of public about the role of Harithakarma sena in waste management and promotion of sustainable development. The most crucial problem faced by Kerala state was waste accumulation and lack of waste management and practices. Therefore, the study itself is an evaluation from the public about the effectiveness and implementation of Harithakarma sena. This study's methodology is based on quantitative research. Questionnaire will be used to gather the data. The study provides light on the degree of improved public health that Harithakarma sena members have attained since joining the team. The respondents have acknowledged that the role of Harithakarma sena is influential in promoting sustainable consumption patterns among the residents. The issue of electronic waste should be given an emphasis. Each Harithakarma sena unit must pay attention to the numerous variables that contribute to sustainable development in the area.***
Keywords: Harithakarma sena, waste management, grassroot level, sustainable waste management, public health, women empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

Haritha Karma Sena is a Kerala government's initiative through Kudumbasree aims to turn waste into income. Kerala's unique biodiversity, tourism industry and water scarcity during lean season emphasises a need for effective waste management system and thereby minimising environmental impact. Three submissions such as sanitation and waste management, water resources rejuvenation and conservation, and sustainable agriculture encompasses this umbrella mission. Haritha Karma Sena contributed actively to the sustainable system by providing services at door steps, giving technical support to households and act as a service provider for community composting and managing facilities such as mini-MCF, MCF, and Resource Recovery Facilities (RRF). Haritha Karma Sena work with the emphasis of providing employment and income through the collection and treatment of waste materials. Altogether, it is a transformative movement promoting environmental stewardship, community empowerment, economic opportunity, and women empowerment.

This research investigates the contribution of Harithakarma sena in sustainable development. A new theme "a study on the perception of public regarding the role of Harithakarma sena in waste management and sustainable development" was created using the concept of sustainable development as the major concept and connecting Harithakarma sena to this concept. The goal of the study is to understand the role of sustainable development practices in mitigating the impact of ecological fragility.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the major problem Kerala is facing daily is its waste management. As per estimates from a mews paper report, 11,449 tonnes of solid waste are accumulated in Kerala of which about 7,928 tonnes are generated in rural areas. The Kerala Government initiated to improve the public health through the 'Malinyamuktham Navakeralam' Campaign. Harithakarma sena was formed to solve the issue of acute waste management crisis and aims in turning the waste into income. Currently, 32,440 Harithakarma sena are working in collaboration with Suchithwa mission, the Health Department and Clean Kerala Company. The major objective of Harithakarma sena constitutes water, cleanliness and yield as well as alleviation of poverty and women empowerment among the workers.

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This service is a beacon of hope to the present society and the future generations at large. The program has so far spanned a period of seven years.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Santhoshi Kumari and UV Kiran, July 2021) notes that the rag pickers contribute a huge role in solid waste management and environmental conservation in developing countries. Rag pickers recover up to 20- 50% of recyclable waste in developing countries. These recovered materials are reintroduced into the economic cycle through the processes of recycling and reuse.

(Sandeep Chouhan and Anita Yuvaraj Nawale, June 2018) in their study on home makers from Pune city, India underlines the need for enhancing the understanding of domestic homemakers on waste management and its connection to health. It is concluded with the aspect that acknowledges the huge role the domestic home makers play in domestic waste management.

(Ajith, December 2016) conducted a study on the municipalities of Kerala and the findings of the study shows that waste collection efficiency varies from municipalities to municipalities. Door to door collections are prevalent but open dumping and community bins are preferred.

The study brough to light the role of public awareness and community engagement in waste management in Kerala and analysed the economic and environmental costs of open dumping as compared to sustainable practices.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are to assess whether there is any improvement in waste management and sustainable development of the grassroot level through Harithakarma sena.

The study aims to :

1) To assess the level of awareness among the community regard the role of Harithakarma sena
2) To evaluate public perceptions of the effectiveness of Harithakarma sena's waste management and sustainable development goal strategies
3) To identify areas community recommendations to enhance Harithakarma sena's impact on sustainable development

V. DATA AND METHDOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used in the study. The research employed both primary and secondary sources. A questionnaire schedule was used to obtain primary data from 22 residents in different panchayats of Kerala's Ernakulam district. The sample was chosen using convenient sampling. The questionnaire schedule was created to evaluate their perception about the contribution of Harithakarma sena in their panchayat. Journals, articles and reports from the newspapers, weekly magazines and other periodicals were used as secondary sources.

The data acquired from both primary and secondary sources were quantified and analysed in qualitative terms, revealing that the Harithakarma sena has significantly contributed to the waste management in the grassroot level and enhanced the role of women in contributing to the sustainable development goals.

VI. RESULTS

1) Awareness Regarding Harithakarma Sena And Its Involvement In Waste Mangemnt And Sustainable Development

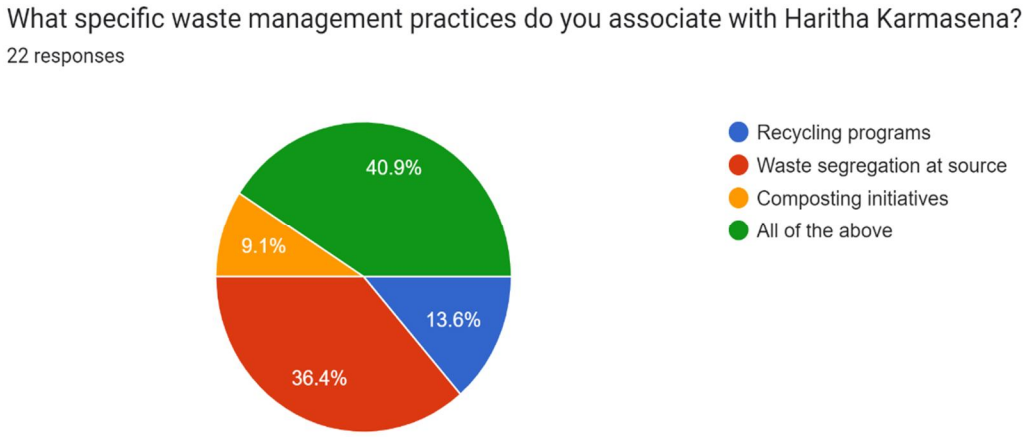
40.9% of the respondents are somewhat aware of the Harithakarma sena. No respondents have not aware of Harithakarma Sena. Today, 30,890 Haritha Sena members are actively working in the wards of Kerala. The reason is proper waste management is one of the important objectives of Harithakarma sena along with income generation.

2) Role Of Harithakarmasena In Contribution Towards Achievement Of Sustainable Development Goals

Majority (59.1%) of the respondents believe that Harithakarma sena is moderately effective in managing waste in the community. Harithakarma sena provides guidance on installing composting systems, organic waste management, provides awareness to the public about waste management and improving public health. They collect non- organic waste that are kept in houses at regular intervals by charging a user fees.

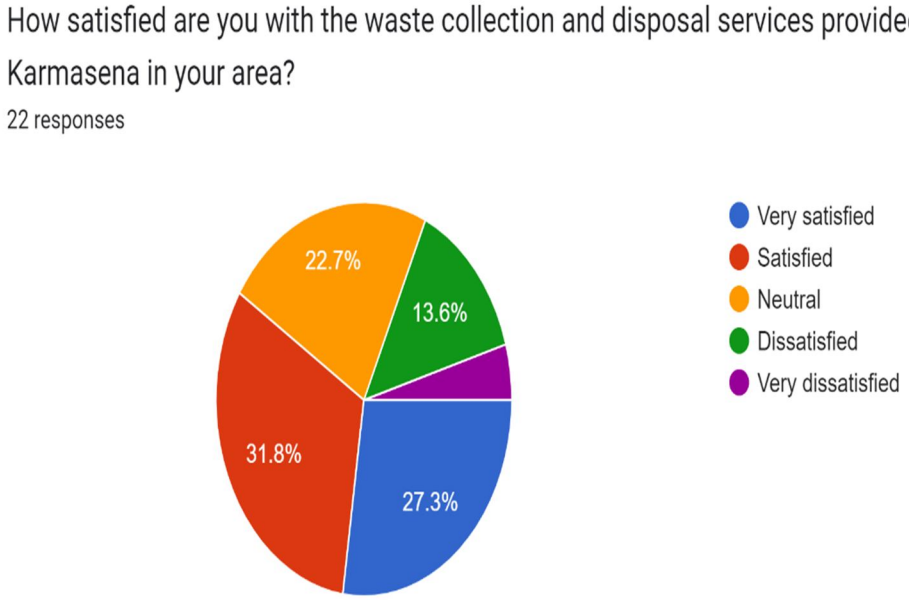
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3) Major Waste Management Practices Associated With Harithakarma Sena



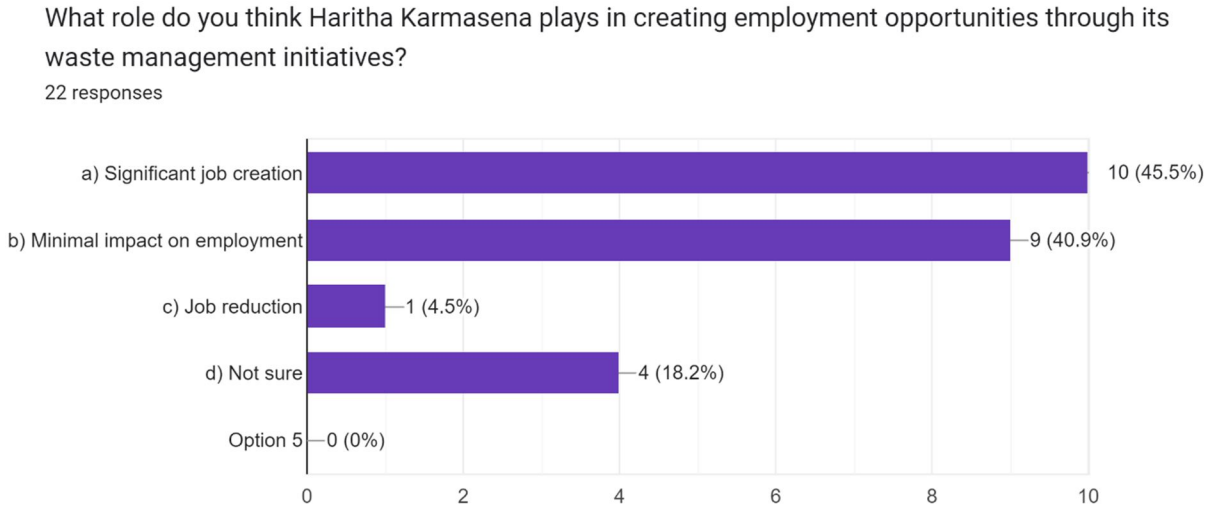
The above data shows that the majority of the respondents associate with the waste management practises such as recycling programs, waste segregation at source as well as composting initiatives of Harithakarma sena. The respondents benefit from organic waste management and felt the importance of contributing to environmental impact through recycling activities and composting programs.

4) Satisfaction Among The Public With The Waste Collection And Services Provided By Harithakarma Sena



Regarding whether individuals are satisfied with the waste collection and disposal services provided by Harithakarma sena, the data suggests that out of the total respondents, approximately 31.8 % answered satisfied, while 13.6% responded with dissatisfied. 45.5% of the respondents believes that Harithakarma sena partially addresses the issue of electronic waste in the community and 36.4% responded that Harithakarma sena is ineffective in addressing the issue of e-waste.

5) Employment Opportunities Created Through Harithakarma Sena's Waste Management Initiatives



45.5% of the respondents believe that Harithakarma sena created employment opportunities through the waste management programs. The waste collection, segregation, recycling, or other aspects of the waste management process directly contributes to job creation. These employment opportunities can create a positive contribution to the overall well-being to the community. There will be minimal impact on employment opportunities among Harithakarma sena workers as they lack specific set of skills required for the job and due to lack of diversification of programmes.

6) Reccomendations To Improve Harithakarma Sena's Role In Waste Mangement And Sustainable Development

It appears that collected responses regarding the recommendations for improving Harithakarma sena's role in waste management and sustainable development to raise their views and suggestions. The data suggests that % of the respondents needs increased public engagement. They also suggested more funding support for the Harithakarma sena to run effectively and improved technology adoption in waste management.

VII. FINDINGS

1) The study revealed that majority of respondents (40.9%) of respondents are somewhat aware of Harithakarma sena and its involvement in waste management and sustainable development that is out of 22 respondents
2) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (68.2%) of respondents believed that Harithakarma sena is moderately effective in managing waste in their community.
3) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (59.1%) are of the opinion that Harithakarma sena has contributed to the achievement of sustainable goals in their region.
4) The study revealed that majority of the respondents(50%) believes that Harithakarma sena is very transparent in communicating its waste management strategies and outcomes to the public.
5) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (40.9%) is of the opinion that Haritha Karmasena effectively and consistently engaged with local communities to raise awareness about waste management practices. Another (40.9%) of the respondents believes that Haritha Karmasena effectively and occasionally engaged with local communities to raise awareness about waste management practices.
6) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (72.7%) believed that Harithakarma sena is moderately influential in promoting sustainable consumption patterns among residents
7) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (68.2%) believed Harithakarma sena somewhat considerate the socio-economic impact of its waste management initiatives on local communities

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8) The study revealed that majority of the respondents(31.8%) have satisfied with the waste collection and disposal services provided by Harithakarma sena in their area
9) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (54.5%) is of the perception that Harithakarma sena to some extent effectively use technology in its waste management strategies
10) The study revealed that majority of the respondents(45.5%) believes that Harithakarma sena addressed the issue of e-waste partially in their community
11) The study revealed that majority of the respondents(31.8%) thinks that Harithakarma sena has to some extent addresses the issues of illegal dumping of waste in their area
12) The study revealed that majority of the respondents (45.5%) is of the opinion that Harithakarma sena has contributed to reducing environmental pollution in their area

VIII. SUGGESTIONS

1) Provide more funding support
2) Enhance public engagement
3) Actively involve through youth engagement programs
4) Provide more technology support and skill development programs

IX. DISCUSSIONS

Based on the data gathered through the various approach and researcher's own checklist, it can be concluded that the study supports the assertion that Harithakarma sena plays a significant role in improving the waste management and public health. It creates employment opportunities for the women and contributes to women empowerment. Harithakarma sena integrates both economic and environmental goals in its waste management practices. Harithakarma sena, to some extent, effectively utilise technology in its waste management strategies. Also, they consider socio-economic impact of its waste management initiatives on local communities. Some of the challenges perceived by Harithakarma sena workers in achieving its waste management and sustainable development goals include lack of public participation, insufficient funding, political interference as well as lack of sufficient employees. The public believed that by increasing public engagement, providing more funding support, improving technology adoption can enhance the sustainable waste management goal.

(A K M Maksud, Mohammad Ekramold Islam and Mosammat Tahamina Akter, June 2022) in their study on waste pickers and their contribution to sustainable development indicate some findings related to this study. The waste picker's role has significantly reduced the amount of waste that required collection and disposal by municipal authorities. The work supported informal recycling institutions and created jobs for many. The study shows how effectively the workers has contributed to urban waste management and recycling despite living in difficult living conditions. Altogether, Harithakarma sena contributes to women empowerment, skill development, income generation, exploring innovation technological solutions, community awareness and education, promoting recycling and strongly advocating for sustainable policies

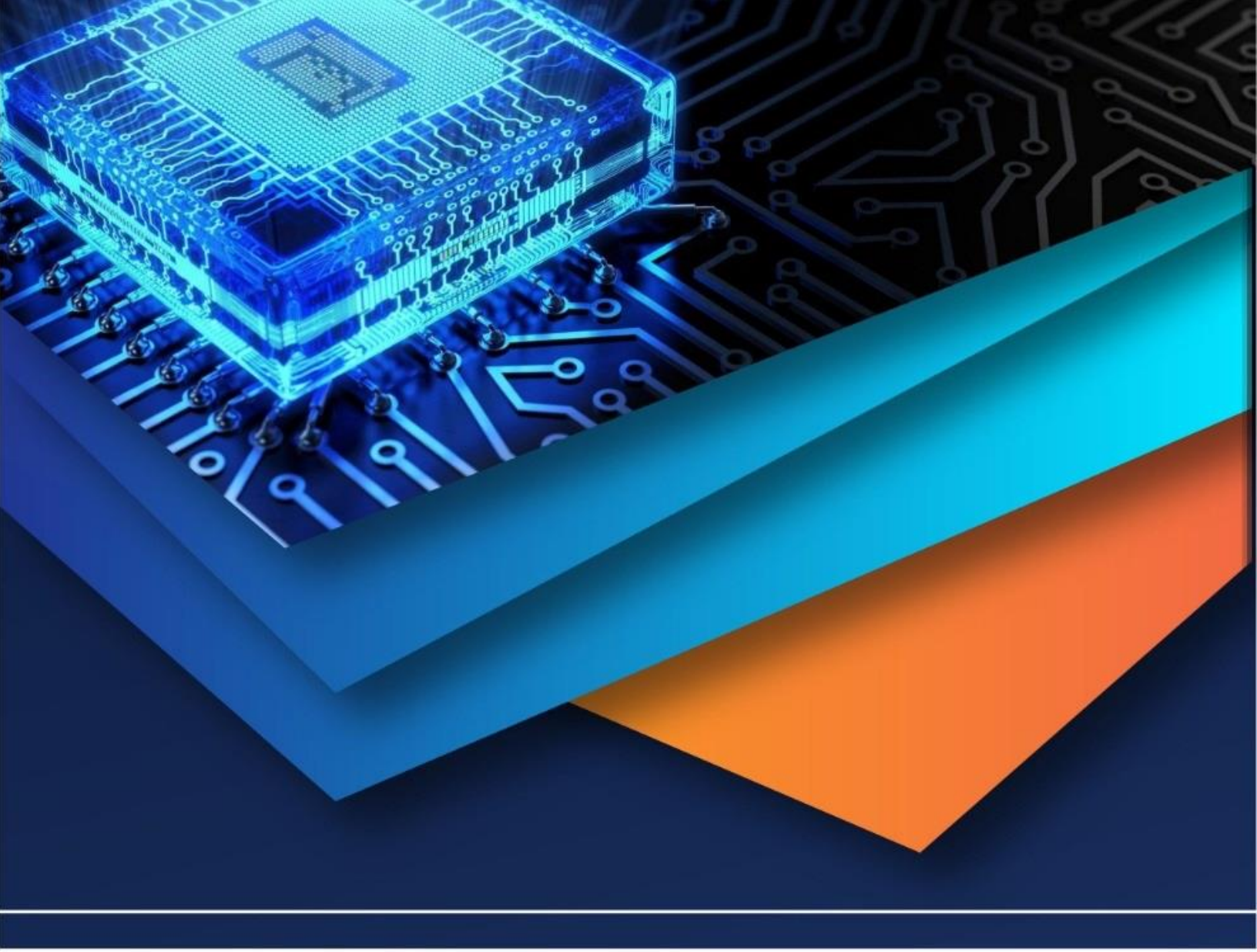
X. CONCLUSION

Population density, rapid urbanization, lifestyle changes and limited space for waste disposal creates a huge need of waste management in Kerala. Sustainable waste management has a crucial goal for ensuring environmental, economic as well as social development and well-being. Harithakarma sena despite of the challenges, contributes to creating healthier living conditions for the community. In short, Harithakarma sena can be seen as a model by other states as it is a true symbol of environmental stewardship.

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