

A Zero-Waste Tourist Destination Program in Sahastradhara, Dehradun, Uttarakhand

**Program Report 2019 - 2020** 

*In Partnership With:* 

Supported By:









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#### **About Waste Warriors**

#### **OUR ORIGINS**

Founded in 2012, Waste Warriors is a registered society and solid waste management NGO. We work through a combination of direct action initiatives like area transformations and waste processing, awareness-raising and behavioral change programs, community engagement and development, and long-term collaborative partnership with various government bodies.

#### **OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to develop sustainable solid waste management systems by being a catalyst for community-based decentralized initiatives in rural, urban, and protected areas, and to pioneer replicable models of waste management, innovative practices in awareness and education, and to formalize and improve the informal livelihoods and stigmatized conditions of waste workers.

#### **Our Link With UN's Sustainable Development Goals**

We are focused on empowering waste workers and supporting residential and business communities in Sahastradhara to adopt responsible and sustainable practices, which are directly linked to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 8, 11, 13 and 15.



**No Poverty**: Our Green Workers are the backbone of our SWM efforts in Dehradun, and many worked in informal jobs before joining us. Our efforts have provided them a living wage, employee insurance, and other benefits.



**Decent Work & Economic Growth**: By providing safe and respectable working conditions we want everyone working with waste to get decent work and also receive safety gear and livelihood training on SWM like our Green Workers do.



**Sustainable Cities and Communities**: Our Green Workers work with over a hundred establishments to collect and segregate waste, and we've worked to bring behavioural change to these communities to improve their source segregation.



**Climate Action**: Our efforts to prevent mixing of recyclable and organic waste, to promote at-source composting of food/horticultural waste, and to prevent burning of any kind of waste directly reduces harmful greenhouse gases generated.



**Life On Land**: By cleaning lanes, promoting proper dustbin usage and maintenance, and ensuring timely waste collection and disposal, we are trying our best to ensure that life on land, and in the rivers, is not affected by waste.





#### Sahastradhara: The Path To Zero Waste



Our goal for Sahastradhara in 2019-20 was to begin its much-needed transformation into a zero-waste tourist destination. Our small team worked to implement SWM systems and show the community the benefits of our work through awareness-raising and engagement programs with the aim of changing the way local people deal with their waste. We wanted to inculcate the importance of keeping these waterfalls clean and free from unsightly waste. We believe that each individual plays a vital role in balancing out our ecosystem and we tried our best to help them make better choices that can lead to a cleaner future for Sahastradhara.



**Initially, Sahastradhara was a sight for sore eyes** with no proper facility for waste collection and disposal. From dirty lanes to overflowing dustbins, one would find waste in almost every nook and corner. Now, with the support of Make My Trip Foundation and with the help of community members and volunteers, we have cleaned up many such areas, from lanes to dumping sites as seen above. With our awareness programs in place, local community members are realizing the importance of segregating waste at source. However, the main and continuing future challenge will still be with generating awareness amongst future floating tourist populations.

# Our Partnership with MakeMyTrip Foundation







MakeMyTrip Foundation's objective is to invest resources and create awareness to support sustainable & responsible tourism in India. They actively and passionately support development in India through various initiatives on sustainable tourism. Some of these include encouraging responsible tourism, ensuring environmental sustainability and undertaking projects towards restoration and development.(1)

Waste Warriors' mission is to build sustainable and replicable solid waste management systems by being a catalyst for communities and government bodies. We've been working to keep tourist hotspots clean since our inception, from the high-footfall Triund campsite and Bhagsunag Waterfall in Dharamshala, Himachal, to the heavily littered peripheral areas around the popular Jim Corbett National Park.

# **Our Approach**

**Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising** 

**Govt. Partnerships & Implementation Support** 

**Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives** 

**Collection & Processing of Waste** 

# **Our Objectives**

- **1.** To raise awareness amongst the community on the importance of proper solid waste management and the hazards of littering, dumping, and burning of mixed waste.
- **2.** To reduce the amount of mixed waste going to the municipal dumping ground by encouraging segregation at source from all participating community members and providing daily and affordable door-to-door dry waste collection services.
- **3.** To minimize and prevent littered waste on roads,water bodies, trails, waterfalls, and tourist hotspots.
- **4.** To set up and operate DWMC (Decentralized Waste Management Centre) for segregation and value addition of recyclable waste.
- **5.** To set up a composting unit to handle wet waste (biodegradable waste) within Sahastradhara.
- **6.** To partner with local authorities to effectively implement our initiatives, in line with SWM Rules 2016.

# **Our Office Staff**

#### **Amritansh, Associate Manager - Operations**

Amritansh joined the Waste Warriors family in August 2019 and took charge of the Sahastradhara project as the project manager. He looks after overall program implementation and government liaising. Amritansh has been working on solid waste management for the last four years. He is also the go-to person in our office for all composting related queries.



#### **Sulagna Sivprava, Associate Manager - Outreach & Partnerships**

Sulagna joined the Waste Warriors family in September 2019 and takes care of designing and implementing outreach and awareness initiatives. She recently graduated from UNSW Business School, Sydney, and has worked on several social issues which also includes working on sustainable cities.



#### **Ashish Negi, Associate - Outreach & Partnerships**

Ashish worked as a Quantitative Aptitude Content Developer for an online coaching website, before joining us as a Project Associate. He takes care of on-ground implementation of the program, working directly with Sahastradhara communities and supervising our Green Workers. It's his first stint in a non-profit and he has been enjoying this change of work and the sense of purpose that it gives him.



# **Our Local Community Leaders**









**Anil Negi:** He has been living in Sahastradhara since birth and now owns a dairy shop. He is always coming up with new ideas and techniques to reduce the littering and burning of waste in Sahastradhara.

**Anup Payal:** He owns a restaurant and guest house in the main market area of Sahastradhara. He is very friendly and one of the most liked members in the community. He proactively organizes clean-up drives and tries to solve queries of other shopkeepers on waste management.

**Bali Dogra:** He owns a restaurant near the Sahastradhara bus-stand which is the most crowded and heavily littered spot in the area. He is also the one who takes great ownership of the area and asks tourists to use the dustbins instead of littering.

**Baliram:** He owns a fruits and vegetables shop in Sahastradhara's main market. He lived in France for the last 10 years and speaks highly of their cleanliness standards. He is very determined to bring in that level of cleanliness into Sahastradhara. His passion for the cause is unmatched and infectious.

#### **Our Green Workers**



**Brijesh** is from Dehradun and worked in a Military Hospital prior to joining Waste Warriors. He supervises our Green Workers and looks after their day-to-day operations. He says that working with Waste Warriors has made him aware of the various categories of waste that exist, and has also taught him the importance of segregating and recycling. This knowledge makes him feel that his work is very crucial for the world.



**Vishal** worked as a hotel supervisor for three years in Himachal Pradesh before moving to Sahastradhara. This is his first job in the waste management sector. He has been with the Waste Warriors family since October 2019. What he really enjoys at Waste Warriors is the motivation to work hard and the newfound knowledge on how his work is helping the environment.



**Sanjay** is the most experienced amongst our workers and has been working in handling waste for the last 11 years for a hotel in Shimla. He immediately understood the nature of work when he joined us in December 2019. However, what he newly learnt was how to properly dispose, sort and process different kinds of waste, of which he was not aware. This was exciting for him and very empowering as well.



**Pradesh** worked as a truck driver with Nagar Nigam for a year before joining our team. He loves the less-formal and friendly work environment. He said that even after having worked for the Nagar Nigam, he did not know that waste needs to be segregated at source. He finds the different techniques of waste management here very useful and exciting.



**Rinku** is the newest member in our team and was also working as a truck driver with the Dehradun Nagar Nigam before joining us in February 2020. He is very hard-working, always eager to learn and takes up a lot of work proactively. Like Pradesh, he feels that despite working with Nagar Nigam, he never learnt the importance of waste segregation. Rinku now finds his work very fulfilling because he understands the impact of what he does.

# **Our Efforts in Photos**

# More & Better Public Dustbins



Awareness Sign Boards



**Mural Art For Awareness** 



**Door-to-Door Waste Collection** 



**Volunteer-Driven Clean-Up Drives** 



**Lobbying For DWMC Land** 



#### **Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives**

50

#### **Dustbins Installed**

that are monkey-proof, regularly emptied and maintained.

mainta

To keep Sahastradhara's marketplace clean, along with many main areas where tourists would gather, we installed 50 dustbins that are placed and re-placed strategically so that each dustbin is clearly visible and accessible.

Earlier, tourists who used to litter either at corner spots or in the river have been using our dustbins. Shopkeepers have also started asking tourists to use them, which is a great step!

#### **Better Public Dustbins**



#### **Door-to-Door Collection**



#### **Businesses Engaged**

with door-to-door collection to collect their segregated waste.

120

We provided door-to-door segregated waste collection service to 120 establishments. We primarily targeted food and hospitality businesses as they are the primary bulk generators and most tourists gather around these shops, especially the main market. Our trained Green Workers used two MMT-branded cycle rickshaws to collect and transport the recyclable, non-recyclable, and wet waste.

18.6
Metric Tons

#### **Total Waste Collected**

From businesses and dustbins from June 2019 to June 2020.

We collected and segregated over 18 tons of waste generated in Sahastradhara! Despite no land allocation for a Decentralized Waste Management Centre, we pushed through this challenge and used the temporary segregation and storage space provided by Uttarakhand Tourism Department since our 1st quarter, as we knew that it was impractical for our Green Workers to store their filled waste bags at certain areas in the marketplace or anywhere else.

#### **Post-Collection & Transport**



#### **Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives**

5

#### **Green Workers on-site**

On duty for waste collection, lane-cleaning, & dustbin maintenance.

We allocated five Green Workers along Sahastradhara's 1.5km winding road and lanes. They start work at 9am every day with door-to-door collection from establishments. They then empty and clean all dustbins, as well as sweep and clean the road and lanes, and also use litter-grabbers in tougher areas like the river-side where tourists would litter.

#### **Lane Cleaning & Maintenance**



#### **Clean-Up Drives**



#### **Clean-Ups Conducted**

with volunteers, college students, local residents & shopkeepers.



Clean-ups, especially with locals, are essential to deal with black spots like dump sites and littered lanes. A highlight was our massive clean-up in December 2019, with 50 college students, corporate volunteers, and even 10 shop owners participating in something which they had previously repeatedly turned down.

This proactive behaviour is a testimony to the ground work we've covered so far. Our presence here has built a strong trust with businesses. Our biggest success here is the ability to have built a sense of ownership within the community. It is this ownership that will ensure long-term sustainability of the project.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

#### Doon NGO clears 200kg waste from Sahastradhara



#### **Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising**

#### **Poster and Waste Bag Distribution**

We distributed awareness material on waste segregation along with reusable waste bags to all participating businesses, from shops to food and hospitality, in Sahastradhara.

The awareness poster visualises how to correctly segregate recyclables from non-recyclables and food waste. We briefed locals about the importance of waste segregation, of composting, of saving recyclables, and separating non-recyclables and hazardous items.











# Sign Boards Installed installed to raise awareness amongst tourists & businesses.

In the first phase of our awareness-raising initiatives, we installed eight bilingual awareness sign boards that were aimed at sensitizing people in the main tourist areas to keep their environment clean and to use the dustbins around them. Shopkeepers helped us install the signboards and expressed their interest to direct tourists and their customers to use the dustbins.

We also installed a large 'Do's and Don'ts' signboard near the bus stop, with key points for tourists to do and to avoid doing to help keep this area clean.

#### **Awareness Sign Boards**



#### (10)

# Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising

#### Awareness Murals

# St. 34th Arthurs and a state of the state of

#### **Area Beautifications**

in the form of 'Art for Awareness' initiatives through painted murals.

3

With the help of local artists, volunteers from DIT, Graphic Era, Doon University, local community members and Green workers, we painted murals of 180 ft<sup>2</sup> on three walls with awareness-raising messaging. These eye-catching murals target the main market area since most tourists gather around there.





# 22

#### **Active Local Citizens**

like residents & shop owners who actively cleaned Sahastradhara.

From local residents to owners and operators of shops, food joints, and hospitality businesses, we've been fortunate to have onboarded 22 active community members in Sahastradhara, who we have named our 'Swachhta ke Sipahi'!

Their enthusiasm and sense of ownership is very visible and we truly appreciate it. Some share new ideas on what can be done there, some proactively organize clean-ups, and some try to solve queries of other shopkeepers on waste management. We look forward to supporting them as we move ahead.

#### Swachhta ke Sipahi



# **Who Did Our Program Impact?**

#### **GREEN WORKERS**

We've been able to provide Green Workers with formal employment and empower them through training and capacity building, so they feel a sense of pride towards their work, and a stronger connection and trust-building with the local community.

#### **LOCAL BUSINESSES, CITIZENS AND TOURISTS**

As this area's reputation for being a clean & zero-waste destination grows, it will attract more tourists which will in turn increase revenues for the local business community. The program has also helped to communicate the message of responsible tourism amongst the floating population of tourists.

#### **SAHASTRADHARA DMC & GRAM PANCHAYAT**

This program has significantly benefited these local authorities as our objectives align with their own economic and social development goals. It also reduced their burden of waste collection operations and expenses, and provided them with a feasible model on which to scale up.

#### **LOCAL & DOWNSTREAM ENVIRONMENTS**

By collecting over 18 metric tons of waste this year, our team has ensured that the impact of waste on Sahastradhara's environment has been mitigated. By preventing burning of waste by the riverside and dumping of waste into the river, we've improved the quality of the water, including downstream, since the Song River joins the Ganga River at Rishikesh.



# 4 years

of meaningful work and serving the environment with us!

#### Brijesh, Our Warrior at Work

Our Green Worker Brijesh is from Dehradun and is the sole earning member for a family of four. He left school at the age of 14 due to persistent health issues. He was working as a cleaning staff at a military hospital in Dehradun for almost two years before joining Waste Warriors as a Green Worker 4 years ago! He joined the Sahastradhara team in August 2019.

He wasn't aware of the concept of SWM before joining Waste Warriors and today he is empowered to supervise the work of four Green Workers and even educate the shop owners on how to segregate their waste properly and effectively!

He enjoys this newfound knowledge, ownership, and the supervisory skills that he gets to develop as a result of his work. Empowering those who work in the waste management sector is a big part of our mission and we are glad that Brijesh is empowered today not just to do a job, but to support and transform communities!

# **Testimonials From The Community**

#### Ramesh Shahi | Sahastradhara Resident

"I have been living in Sahastradhara since my birth. There was a time when there were no shops, no tourists, we were just like any other beautiful village gifted with sulphur springs. But, over the years, tourists and the growing commercialization has destroyed the serene beauty we were once accustomed to. The complacency of the Dehradun Authority is also disappointing. But, ever since you have started to take charge, I notice that there is a growing awareness amongst people to not litter and properly handle their waste. The workers are also very dedicated and ensure that dustbins and lanes are cleaned every day. I am really happy that you have come to restore our village and we are willing to support you in this endeavour."



#### Amit Panwar | Swachhta ke Sipahi, Sahastradhara



"I am Amit Panwar and have been residing in Sahastradhara since early 2013. I run a small shop called 'Garhwal Communications' in the main market area. With tourists flocking to Sahastradhara every year, and only growing in numbers, it has transformed from being an almost non-existent village to a tourist hot-spot. What has changed for the worse is the cleanliness. With Waste Warriors intervention, a lot of things have changed for the better. There are more dustbins and the lanes are being cleaned on a daily basis. What is commendable is the fact that waste is now being segregated at source. This is something we hadn't heard of before. I have made it a point to segregate my waste at source and would insist that other shop owners also do the same."

#### Yashpal Ji | Gram Pradhan, Kairaligad, Sahastradhara

"I am Yashpal, Gram Pradhan of Kairaligad village in Sahastradhara. The tourists were a menace and we didn't know how to deal with them, prior to your intervention. We also did not have any waste disposal mechanism and most of the garbage was either burnt or scattered across the village. I am so glad to see that things are now changing for the better. Waste Warriors is working on educating tourists and most importantly building the required infrastructure to manage waste. I am really looking forward to the day when we will together transform Sahastradhara into a clean, beautiful, zero-waste tourist destination."



# **Overview of Our Efforts**

S.I No.	Activity	Proposed Target	Achieved	Pending (To be completed in 2020-21)	Comments			
Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising								
1	Awareness Raising Campaign: Clean-Up Drives (with IEC canopy)	12	6	6	For clean up of black spots and heavy littered areas with volunteers and community members.			
2	Community Engagement Programs	12	6	6	Community engagement and partnership programs with local community members and Swachhta ke Sipahi			
3	Swachhta ke Sipahi	20	22	0	Active community members			
Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives								
4	Total Waste collected (in Kgs)	-	21,018	-	Overall Generated waste from the project site in year 2019-20			
5	Door to door collection	100	120	0	Door to door waste collection from local business establishments			
6	Anti littering Awareness-Raising Sign boards Installation	12	9	3	Boards with awareness raising slogans and infographics			
7	Dustbin Installation	50	50	0	50 metal dustbins installed all over the project location			
	Government Partnerships & Implementation Support							
8	Events with DMC/Local Bodies	2	1	1	Events with stakeholders to build relationships and facilitate workers and waste pickers			

#### **Our Challenges & Impact of COVID-19 on Project Deliverables**

- → The lack of allocated land was one of the biggest challenges we faced in order to move forward with our Decentralized Waste Management Center (DWMC). After multiple rounds of liaising with the Destination Management Committee (DMC), the Irrigation Department, and Village Panchayat, the Director of DMC have now finally agreed to allocate land for our DWMC.
- → Since Sahastradhara's off-season is from November to March, these months gave us very limited opportunities to execute awareness events and other tourist oriented project activities. However, door-to-door collection and dustbin maintenance were still operational wherever possible.
- → Mid-March to June 3rd 2020 was met with the Covid-19 lockdown which put a complete halt to our general operations and awareness initiatives as well as activities in the area. However, Waste Warriors is committed to executing and achieving the pending deliverables which couldn't be achieved last year in the upcoming year.
- → Sharing on the following page the list of deliverables which were majorly affected and couldn't be implemented due to sudden lockdown citing COVID. All the pending deliverables from 2019-20 will be executed this year.

# **Impact of COVID-19 On Our Work**

S.I No.	Activity	Proposed Target	Achieved	Pending (To be completed in 2020-21)	Comments					
	Community Engagement & Awareness-Raising									
1	Anti-Littering Placards Distribution (for Taxis & Buses)	550	0	550	We were hoping to distribute them in March for raising awareness in the busy tourist months starting from March till October but then this activity was halted because of the COVID lockdown					
2	Clean Business Program Enrollment	30	0	30	Formulation of program model and Identification of the businesses has been done. We couldn't onboard them again due to the lockdown					
	Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives									
3	Set up of Dry Waste Management Centre (DWMC)	1	0	1	Delay in the procurement of land from the local government authorities, further setback in construction due to COVID					
4	Dry leaves composting enclosure Setup	10	0	10	Delay in the procurement of land from the local government authorities. However we are replacing them with a single Composting Unit for food and leaf waste in the coming year					
5	Area Beautification (murals)	10	3	7	We had intended to cover these Murals under an organization level waste awareness fest, Carnival of Crap, which was scheduled for March 28-29 but couldn't be executed due to the advisory against public gatherings during COVID.					

#### Measures Taken Prior To The Lockdown:

- Conducted a session with our Green Workers to raise their awareness about Covid-19.
- Provided tips on identifying fake news and information.
- Provided soap and sanitizers and taught them the proper technique of washing hands.
- Ensured they had and used their safety masks and gloves.
- Advised against handshakes and touching their faces without washing hands.

#### **Measures Taken During The Lockdown:**

- To keep our Green Workers safe from the transmission of Covid-19, all activities were suspended and they were asked to stay home during this lockdown.
- To ensure no financial impact on them and their family, there were no deductions in salary.
- We got daily updates on the health of all our Green Workers, and updates from the Ministry of Health were being shared with them.
- We distributed dry food rations to all Green Workers given the urgent need to stay at home.

#### **Restarting Restricted Work During The Unlock Phases:**

- We deployed our Green Workers for lane cleaning, door-to-door collection, and dustbin cleaning.
- We advised them to follow social distancing, to use sanitizers, and take all key safety measures like wearing mask and gloves.
- We took this time to also focus on dustbin maintenance, including cleaning and replacing torn stickers and repainting bins.
- We also had time to follow up with DMC and District Magistrate's office for the dwmc land.

# **Our Relief Efforts During Lockdown**

#### **Supporting Those In Need During Lockdown:**

To help waste workers and daily wage earners cope with the lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic, we initiated a relief fund on Givelndia's donation platform.

Through donations to our relief fund and with support of our Green Workers, including the MMT Sahastradhara team, we distributed dry food ration kits to people in Dehradun and Dharamshala. Approximately 900+ sanitation items including masks, gloves, sanitizers, & soap were distributed to those who need it in Dehradun.



From
435+
donors

To Help
5200+
people







#### **Distributions in Dehradun & Dharamshala**

28,267 KGs

Food Procured 2,013

Relief Kits Packed 1,786

Relief Kits Distributed 66

Areas Distributed 5,217

People Supported



# **Our Way Forward**

While the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown is being felt far and wide, including and especially in the tourism industry, this time actually presents us with an opportunity to continue our efforts to bring Sahastradhara closer to our goal of being a zero-waste tourist destination, so that when the influx of visitors begins again, it'll be met with a stronger and resilient solid waste management infrastructure.

This is why by July 2021, we aim to work on:

#### **Direct Action & Transformation Initiatives**

- **1.** Continue providing the Door to Door Collection (DTDC) services to the intervened 120 establishments from last year.
- **2.** Enrol 2 villages with approximately 157 households outside the project area (near the upcoming DWMC) and help them promote eco-friendly practices amongst their households and minimise waste generation.
- **3.** User fee will be levied upon the enrolled village households & establishments to sustain the waste collection operations once the collections are started on a regular basis.
- **4.** Set up and start operations of 1 Decentralized Waste Management Centre (DWMC) with an approximate monthly waste processing capacity of 6 Tonnes and daily wet waste handling capacity of 60 Kg which will also involve a composting unit.
- **5.** Maintaining 50 dustbins already placed in the project location to mitigate open littering.

#### **Government Partnerships & Implementation Support**

- **1.** Strengthen our program's reach by bringing on board authorised government bodies like Sahastradhara DMC, Uttarakhand Tourism, and Municipal Corporation, Dehradun.
- **2.** Collaborating with DMC to set up anti-littering and anti-burning signboards under the authority of the District Magistrate and implementing fines on the offenders.
- **3.** Associate with DMC to procure land for dwmc in the vicinity of the project area.
- **4.** Partner with Gram Panchayat for smooth and effective implementation of the project.

#### **Project Management & Operations team (Monitoring & Reporting)**

- 1. Organize at least 3 training and skill development sessions for the ground team, including categorised segregation, safety measures, and other daily basis operations and evaluation. Special precautionary measures to be taken in light of the Covid-19 situation.
- **2.** Enhance media support and advocacy for the program's growth and development.

# Thank You to MakeMyTrip Foundation!









Our entire operations team including our Green Workers, both in Sahastradhara and in Dehradun, consider ourselves as catalysts for social and environmental change. This past year, we have been proud to have had the support of MakeMyTrip Foundation as our enabler to bring awareness and build SWM systems in Sahastradhara.

We know from experience that waste management may not necessarily be a sustainable business, especially while we were a small organization in a booming urban capital city. But over the past year, through your support, we've significantly boosted Sahastradhara's solid waste management infrastructure, mitigated environmental impact, and built better relationships with communities across the project area and with government stakeholders. Most importantly, with this kind support, we have been able to provide better working conditions and benefits to our Green Workers, whose efforts are truly commendable given the influx of tourists that Sahastradhara has had and will continue to have after Covid-19.

When we consider the positive environmental and social aspects of effective waste management, despite the hardships and challenges of dealing with waste, it genuinely motivates us to pursue our vision of a cleaner India even harder. On behalf of the entire team in Sahastradhara, we take this opportunity to thank you for helping us reach that vision.

Amritansh Singh Associate Manager, Operations Waste Warriors Society, Dehradun















# I Am A



# WASTE WARRIOR I Segregate My Waste!

DRY / RECYCLABLE

WET/ORGANIC

# DRY WASTE / सूखा कूड़ा



# ORGANIC WASTE / जैविक कूड़ा



**Office Address:** 



Waste Warriors Society
136/2/2 Shivam Vihar,
Jakhan, Rajpur Road,
Dehradun, Uttarakhand - 248001



dehradun@wastewarriors.org



@wastewarriors1



www.wastewarriors.org



+91 78952 67144