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RNI No.TNBIL/2021/81709
Daily Morning Newspaper
The Truth

RS Polyclinic

From the Margins to Leadership



CHENNAI – 12 Nov, 2026 Women engaged in sanitation and waste management are increasingly emerging as entrepreneurs, decision-makers and community leaders, demonstrating how access to institutional support, mechanisation and livelihood opportunities can contribute to their socio-economic empowerment.

The inspiring journey of six women from Telangana and Delhi reflect this transformation, highlighting their determination to move beyond traditional occupational roles and build more secure, independent and dignified futures for themselves and their communities.

In Siricilla, Telangana, five women sanitation workers Anusha Reddy, Kavitha Goud, Swathi Yadav, Srilatha Naidu and Madhavi Kumar (all names changed) had been working as septic tank cleaning helpers under private contractors. Each earned an average monthly income of approximately ₹15,000 while undertaking physically demanding sanitation-related work involving occupational risks and limited opportunities for professional advancement. Despite their experience in sanitation services, financial constraints and limited access to resources made it difficult for them to establish an independent enterprise.