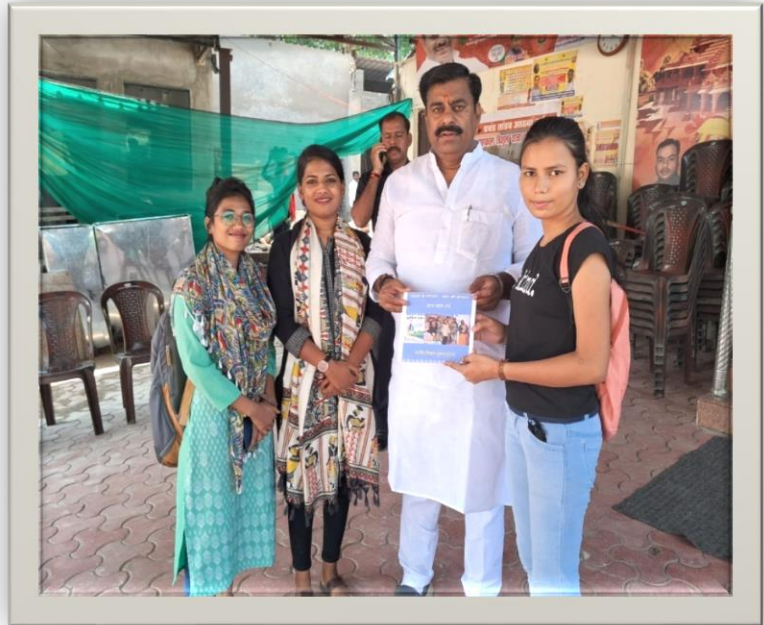


An Environment champion- Pallavi Mahobe

Pallavi Mahobe is a 17-year-old award-winning environment champion and also a spokes person of children CSO called '*Bal Panchayat*'. She lives in an urban slum Ishwar Nagar, Bhopal city capital of Madhya Pradesh State. Her family migrated from Betul district of MP for better livelihood opportunity and education facility for children. Her father is an Iron welder and mother working as ASHA worker.

Pallavi is studying in class 12th and wants to be a Police officer so she can support poor children. She is very much keen about her surroundings cleanliness and environment conservation. Pallavi is an example of how children living in urban slums interact with their environment. Urban slums in India are shanties that have erupted in the vicinity of a city. Set up as erratic spaces, urban slums are categorized by the unsanitary living conditions such as burning heaps of dumps in slum settlements, and so on.



Meera Nagar, Ishwar Nagar is one of the largest slums in Bhopal that

incidentally is also the largest garbage dumping ground. The dumping ground is used to burn heaps of garbage collected across 5 zones in the city. On many occasions, the fire from the garbage burning would spread to the adjacent slum houses. The dumping ground would also emanate a stinky stench as pits for mosquito breeding.

Pallavi took up the mantle to stop this hazardous practice from polluting the environment. She, along with the youth members of NIWCYD a NGO working with children on their rights, decided to raise their voice against it. They discussed this issue in their weekly meeting and decided to take up step. In the leadership of Pallavi children wrote letters to the Municipality Commissioner, a pursuit taken up by the women group of the area as well. They used every medium to communicate their message—twitter, Facebook, letters, personal visits. Resultantly, the Municipal Corporation installed a Waste Recycle Plant in place of the dumping ground. This initiative soon gathered great inspiration and momentum and expanded into an initiative to separate dry waste from wet waste. The children spread awareness in there and neighboring communities on the importance of waste segregation. Now, 600 families are consciously separating dry waste from wet waste and using two bins at household level.

Pallavi and her group didn't stop here; they brought up the issue of waste segregation of bio-hazardous waste in a round table discussion organized by NIWCYD with Upper commissioner of Municipal

Corporation Bhopal. Bio-hazardous waste such as medical waste, sanitary waste, wasn't getting disposed separately. Pallavi and her group used the platform to raise the importance of separating the bio-hazardous waste. Their initiatives bore results and a black box for dumping bio-hazardous was installed by the Corporation to the waste collection vehicle. She also motivated other children and youth for creating awareness against use of single plastic, "Bachho ki Vasundhar" (Children's Earth), spread awareness among the employees of Crompton Greaves Company in Raisen to ban plastic bottles and plastic disposal on their campus. Now the entire office building is single use plastic free! Through their "Roko-Toko" (stop and taunt) campaign in collaboration with Bhopal Municipal Corporation, they worked with the shopkeeper and their committees to install dustbins in the market and impose penalties on those defaulting.

Pallavi's work has been awarded and recognized by the government of Madhya Pradesh. She is the recipient of Swachhta brand ambassador awarded by Municipal Corporation of Bhopal and with Gourav Award by Paryavaran Andolan (The Environment Campaign).

Now she wants Bhopal have to win cleanest city and capital of India; and children not to compel collect garbage as rag picker.

“साथी रे हाथ से हाथ मिलाना, गंदगी को भारत से दूर भगाना।“