

# Recycling in Indian Cities

*A view from the ground*



**The World Bank, Washington D.C**

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**October 2nd 2007**

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## Wasting Local Resources?



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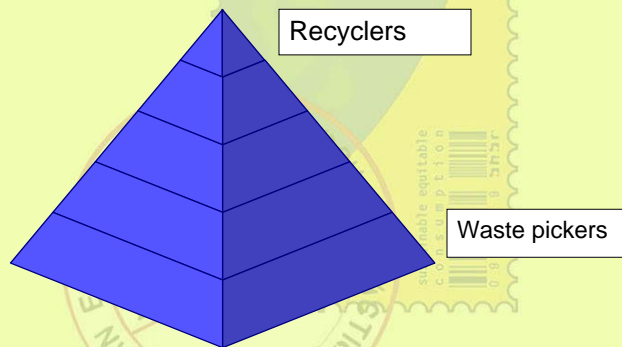
## The Context

- Rapid urbanization
- Migration to cities from rural areas
- Contested ideas of cities
- Increasing amounts of waste generated
- 300 m strong middle class
- Growth rate 8.6%, but only 2% in agriculture
- Sustainable cities critical to growth rate

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## About Informal Sector Waste Recyclers

Typically organized like a pyramid



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## Informal Sector Recycling





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## Informal Sector Recycling



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## Broad Role

- To clean the consumption debris
- Bearing the brunt of waste consumption
- Indirectly used and exploited by industry (plastic industry, for example)

▪ Health Costs

BUT

- Large cost savings

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## Some Statistics

- 750% increase in value in Delhi
- Cairo : Formal Sector handling cost was 10 Euros; Informal Sector 3 Euros
- Recycling Costs : Formal Sector was 81 Euros per ton, Informal Sector 17
- Saves over 15000 Euros a day at least in Delhi

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## Why Waste Recyclers?

- Widespread trend *Migration, New Economies*
- Addresses poverty *Stanford Review*
- Synergy with waste reduction goals
- Debate on toxics and recycling globally (e-waste, mercury)
- Important urban service providers

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## Chintan Framework

- Solid waste is a tool to address urban poverty
- Informal recycling sector provides critical services to cities : sustainable cities
- Work must be cleaner, less hazardous
- The poor display entrepreneurship; This must be encouraged and built upon
- Need for appropriate policy framework

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## What Chintan Does

- Organizes waste recyclers
- Focuses on clean work for urban poor
- Works with communities to phase out children from wastepicking
- Advocacy along with the sector
- Creates an enabling micro-environment
- Acts as a support group

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## Training Women



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## Educating Wastepicker Children



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## Training Police



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## Legal Literacy



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## Challenges

- Dependence on individual official : no legal framework
- Contribution of the sector under-valued
- Shifting Attitudes towards the poor : courts and middle class residents
- Ideas of New India

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## Policy Framework

- National Environment Policy 2006
- Other national committees have also been sympathetic
- Yet, not reflected in laws and planning
- Micro-policies not able to be amplified
- Municipal players at local level do not impact policy making

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## Eg 1 : Transportation

Type of Transportation	Earnings
1. Tricycle/Cycle Rickshaw ( <i>women use this</i> )	1. Over 2 dollars 2. Appx. 2 dollars 3. Appx 1 dollar or less
2. Cycle ( <i>women avoid this</i> )	
3. Walking ( <i>women use this</i> )	

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## Eg 2 :Space for Operations

- Space for segregation
- Space for storage
- Space for parking transportation
- Women then bring in less trash inside homes, impacting health
- Can be organized as micro-enterprises to sell, trade etc. Not possible without land
- Masterplan of Delhi 2021

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## Eg 3 : Privatization

- Delhi privatized waste collection and transportation in 6 zones
- All recyclable waste belongs to the private contractor; Also responsible for local dumps/dhalaos
- Bin guide system; Women unable to participate as bin guides
- Women lose out as group roles cut; Men migrate to other areas and more competition
- Possible to have kept social capital systems intact

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## Gender at the grassroots



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## Gender Impacts of Non-inclusion

- Lack of integrated education systems force women to take children on work, exposing and introducing them to trash
- Cost of children's illness
- Informal status increases illegality. This increases vulnerability and insecurity.
- Women therefore at home (segregation) and married early;
- Unable to break out of poverty due to lack of opportunity combined with vulnerability

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## Conclusions

- Access to waste and livelihoods for the informal sector is critical
- Backward and forward linkages must consider gender needs
- Health is a critical intervention
- Policy must use and build on local systems that are efficient, not break social networks
- Urban planning has to be responsive
- The sector has to be considered as a poverty alleviation strategy in all waste plans
- If cities are to be sites of growth, 'poor pockets' have to be developed

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THANK YOU

Let's discuss this more :

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See our site : [www.chintan-india.org](http://www.chintan-india.org)

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