Alliance of Indian Wastepickers

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Integration of waste-pickers and informal waste collectors
1.1 Who are wastepickers and informal waste collectors?

**Waste picker** means a person or groups of persons informally engaged in collection and recovery of reusable and recyclable solid waste from the source of waste generation the streets, bins, material recovery facilities, processing and waste disposal facilities for sale to recyclers directly or through intermediaries to earn their livelihood.

**Informal waste collector** includes individuals, associations or waste traders who are involved in sorting, sale and purchase of recyclable materials.

- *Source: Solid Waste Management Rules 2016*
1.2 Who are wastepickers and informal waste collectors?

- Majority of the wastepickers and informal waste collectors are migrant workers, displaced by natural disasters, rural distress.
- They belong to the Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and Other Backward Classes.
- A substantial number of wastepickers are women workers.
- Wastepicking and informal waste collection is low investment and income work.
- There is no barrier to entry.
- Most wastepickers go out for waste picking at late hours. Armed with a sack on the back and rod in hand they go for picking waste and protecting oneself against rats and dogs. Some of them use tricycle for faster mobility and collection.
1.3 Wastepickers in India: Essential link between Swachh Bharat Abhiyan & Make in India

• There are no comprehensive estimate of waste-pickers and informal waste collectors.

• World Bank says 1-2 percent of the population engaged in informal waste recycling.

• The Alliance members believe that number can be around 3-4 million (30-40 lakh) waste-pickers in India.

• Alliance of Indian Wastepickers actively participated in formulation of Solid and Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016.

• Waste-pickers and informal waste collectors and their access to waste recognized by the law through Solid and Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016, first of its kind in Asia.

• Wastepickers and informal waste collectors – an essential link between Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Make in India, transforming discards into industrial ore through their labor in collection, sorting, aggregation and sale.
What is the contribution of wastepickers and informal collectors to our cities?

Wastepickers and informal waste collectors are self-learned green entrepreneurs

- They reduce waste handling and transportation cost
- Supply raw materials to manufacturing sector
- Save space at dumping ground
- Trained wastepickers are professional waste management service providers
- If engaged in organic waste management, they provide compost and biogas

Climate change mitigation

- Through their work in recycling, Indian wastepickers reduce more than 6.8 megatons of carbon emissions annually.
- On an average, wastepickers have a negative carbon footprint: -4.2 tons a year.
3.1 What are the rights of the waste-pickers?


1. Right to register and be issued occupational identity card.
2. Right to access waste and retrieve recyclables.
3. Right to sorting space and involvement in MRF/DWCC
4. Right to form self-help groups for bettering livelihood opportunities.
5. Right to be involved in door to door collection of waste.
6. Right to training for skill upgradation.
7. Right to representation in the advisory committee on solid waste management.
8. Entitlement of scholarships for their children, low rate of interest credit for work.

Duty Bearers: Municipal Corporations, State Urban Development Departments
3.2 What are the social entitlements of wastepickers and informal waste collectors?

- 5 days training for better livelihoods by SCGJ supported by NSKFDC.
- 3-6 months training in recycling by CIPET supported by NSKFDC.
- Low rate of interest credit for wastepickers to better their livelihoods by NSKFDC.
- Enrollment in Ayushman Bharat Yojna.
- Health camps for wastepickers and informal waste collectors.
- Provisioning occupational safety gear.
- Pre-matriculation scholarship for children of parents engaged in unclean occupation.
- National Urban Livelihood Mission.
4.1 What is the first step of integration of waste-pickers & informal waste collectors?

1. Universal survey of waste-pickers and informal waste collectors (registration) and issuance of occupational identity cards.

2. Occupational identity card should include the following:

   - Card should be made of durable material, preferably plastic and not merely printed on paper.
   - Name of Wastepicker (or informal waste collector), ward number/locality (where they work or stay), date of birth (approximated, if not available) and address,
   - date of issue and identity card number,
   - signature of the commissioner (or relevant official in the local body).
4.2 Occupational identity card can have the following on the backside

- The card is issued as per Solid Waste Management Rules 2016.
- The holder of this card has a **Right to Collect Waste**.
- This card is not valid for workers below 18 years of age. (Optional)
- No child labour involved.
- Wastepickers are not employees of the Municipal Corporation/or any other issuing authority.
- This card will be used for accessing schemes specific to wastepickers and informal workers.
- If you loose the card, you are responsible for it.
- Organization or Municipal body is not responsible if the wastepicker with the identity card engages in any form of nuisance or theft.
- If the card is found lost, please contact the organization of wastepickers- contact number.
5. What are the next steps of integration of wastepickers & informal waste collectors?

- Involvement in door to door collection of waste
- Involvement in door to door collection of dry waste/recyclables either separately or along with municipal vehicle
- Collection of non-medical waste from hospitals
- Collection of dry waste from malls, schools, colleges and bulk generators
- Operations of Material Recovery Facilities/ Dry Waste Collection Centres
- Organic Waste Management
- Waste management in events

Institutionalize wastepickers and informal waste collectors integration by enshrining the roadmap of integration in the municipal bylaws.
6.1 Who are we? The Alliance of Indian Wastepickers

The Alliance of Indian Wastepickers is a decade old national network of waste-pickers organizations, cooperatives, self-help groups.

- The alliance through its member organizations has an outreach of more than 40,000 wastepickers and informal waste collectors.
- Members of the alliance are spread across 10 states and more than 25 cities of India.
- Secretariat of the alliance is hosted by Stree Mukti Sanghatana, Mumbai. In past Kagad Kach Patra Kashtarkari Panchayat, Pune and Hasiru Dala, Bangalore were its Secretariat.
- Active Partnerships: NSKFDC, UNDP, IGSSS, WIEGO.
6.2 What do we do at the Alliance of Indian Wastepickers

• Policy analysis and recommending policy measures to all levels of governments for the inclusion of wastepickers and informal waste collectors in solid waste management and social protection measures.

• Capacity building of member organizations and municipal authorities to facilitate integration of wastepickers by undertaking training sessions on social entitlements, financial literacy, organic and dry waste management.

• Research focusing on waste management techniques, informal waste chains and status of wastepickers and informal waste collectors.

• Awareness generation about the role played by wastepickers and informal waste collectors in keeping the cities clean, mitigating climate change and contributing to manufacturing.