

JAHAN-E- KABADI

June
2013

The world of the waste recyclers

Jahan-e-Kabari is a platform for sharing ideas and news about the informal recycling sector, on issues that impact informal waste recyclers- wastepickers, pheriwallas, thia walas, kabaris. Despite the crucial services they perform in terms of segregating and recycling waste, their work remains unrecognised or poorly recognized almost everywhere globally. This newsletter will knit ideas together to share with both the sector and the larger world of practitioners and interested persons and organizations.



Manwara Begum

THIS NEWSLETTER IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY:



CHINTAN
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH
AND ACTION GROUP

Jahan-E-Kabari means the world of the waste recycler, in Urdu. Urdu is a heady mixture of several languages with Persian, Turkish, and Arabic influences. It developed in South Asia during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire (1200-1800 AD). We've chosen an Urdu title because its own diverse origins remind us that it's possible to create a common voice and language replete with the richness of many partnerships

About Dignity, and How You Can Help

It is early morning, and there is no one to notice the disgust on Manwara Begum's face while she picks up poorly wrapped, visible used Sanitary Napkins. A wastepicker in New Delhi's Netaji Nagar, Manwara hates it every time she finds one of these. She is also grateful that she has a bunch of waste to call her own. "I feel like throwing up every time one I see poorly wrapped sanitary napkin," she explains. Unfortunately, Manwara cannot escape this stuff- it is part of the job she values so deeply. She picks up waste from the doorsteps of nearly 300 houses. They pay her in cash, but not in dignity. She gets upset narrating her ordeal of handling unhygienic sanitary napkins.

Manwara Begum left her home in Kolkata, West Bengal at the tender age of seven and settled down with her family in Delhi. Her father chose rickshaw pulling and her mother, along with her six siblings, took up waste collection to make both ends meet. At fourteen Manwara was married and it was to another wastepicker. She continued to work and remained in the business of waste.

It's been quite some time for Manwara in this business but there are a few things she just can't get

Continued >



Mohammed Nazir,
Manwara's husband

used to even now. Picking up a used sanitary napkin is one of it. Even if houses try, the packaging which manufacturers expect consumers to use is far from enough. "Why can't people put all these in paper bags and then dispose?" her wastepicker husband, Nazir, asks, angrily. "At least none of us will have to encounter such things every day."

Far away from Manwara Begum, lives Bhajori, with the same issues. Every day he goes up to the huge mountain of trash at the Ghazipur landfill sorting through the tons of garbage and comes across rotting sanitary towels. Bhajori has mined the Ghazipur landfill for over two decades, feeding his family of four children and wife.

"In the 40 degree Delhi heat, the stench from decaying sanitary towels is nothing new for me," he explains with disgust.

"What should the companies do to help wastepickers to overcome

the problem?" We ask him. "They should provide consumers with separate and unique bags to dispose sanitary towels," he says in an assertive tone. "This will help waste pickers to distinguish the waste and what we need. It will save us from the danger of handling unhygienic sanitary towels."

Neither Manwara nor Bhajori's everyday indignities are unique. Wastepickers and collectors across urban India experience this daily.



Bhajori

The packaging provided with each towel is not enough to wrap it well or cover the contents while disposing. Even when concerned women wrap it up in newspaper, it is not distinguishable from other waste, and ends up being opened. Manufacturers must provide distinct and large enough envelopes for the disposal of used sanitary towels.

If the plight of Manwara or Bhajori bothers you, write to Procter and Gamble India Limited, Johnson and Johnson Limited and Hindustan Unilever Limited asking them to provide distinct, adequate sized bags with each packet for disposal and create impactful awareness about using them. **Or, sign this petition on Change.org by visiting:**

<http://www.change.org/en-IN/petitions/why-should-womens-hygiene-rob-a-wastepicker-s-dignity>

Although Chintan takes the responsibility to bring out this newsletter, we can only do so with your diverse inputs. Please write to us at:

Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group
238, Siddharth Enclave
New Delhi - 110 0 14 (India)
or email us at: bharati@chintan-india.org

Web: www.chintan-india.org

Copies also available in Hindi