

LIVELIHOODS: WASTE-PICKERS



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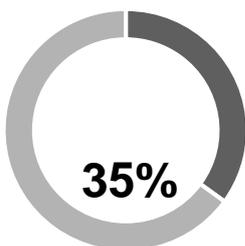
Around two to three lakh people earn their basic income from waste in the city of Delhi. Their work has huge environmental and public health benefits while also reducing costs for the municipality. However, they receive little recognition for this and continue to work and live in terrible conditions. Waste-pickers of the city demand due recognition, legal and social protection, effective integration into city solid waste management system, and adequate spaces to pursue their livelihood in a dignified manner.

Main Bhi Dilli is a people's campaign aiming to envision and enable a more inclusive city. It is a collective of civil society organisations, activists, researchers and others who work on diverse issues of housing, livelihood, gender and other rights.

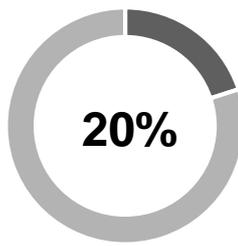
WASTE-PICKERS IN THE CITY

Waste-pickers collect waste from households and shops, retrieve discarded waste from community bins and streets, and process it in different ways like washing and dismantling, before selling it as recyclables. A single person is estimated to collect, sort, and transport 10-15 kilograms of waste a day in Delhi, while those with tricycle carts can collect 50 kilograms a day.

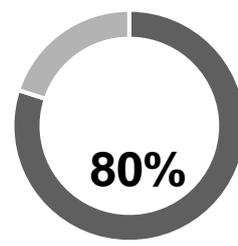
In Delhi, most of the collection is done by men while women sort and segregate the waste in and around their homes which gets subsumed as unpaid family labour. Some women are also waged workers in godowns or with small contractors who sell the recyclables to factories. Mostly migrants, a majority of waste-pickers are Muslims or Dalits.



Of waste produced is dry from which materials can be recovered for recycling



Of waste is currently being recycled by informal waste-pickers- 2500 tonnes per day



Of whatever gets recycled in Delhi is done by informal waste-pickers

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CITY

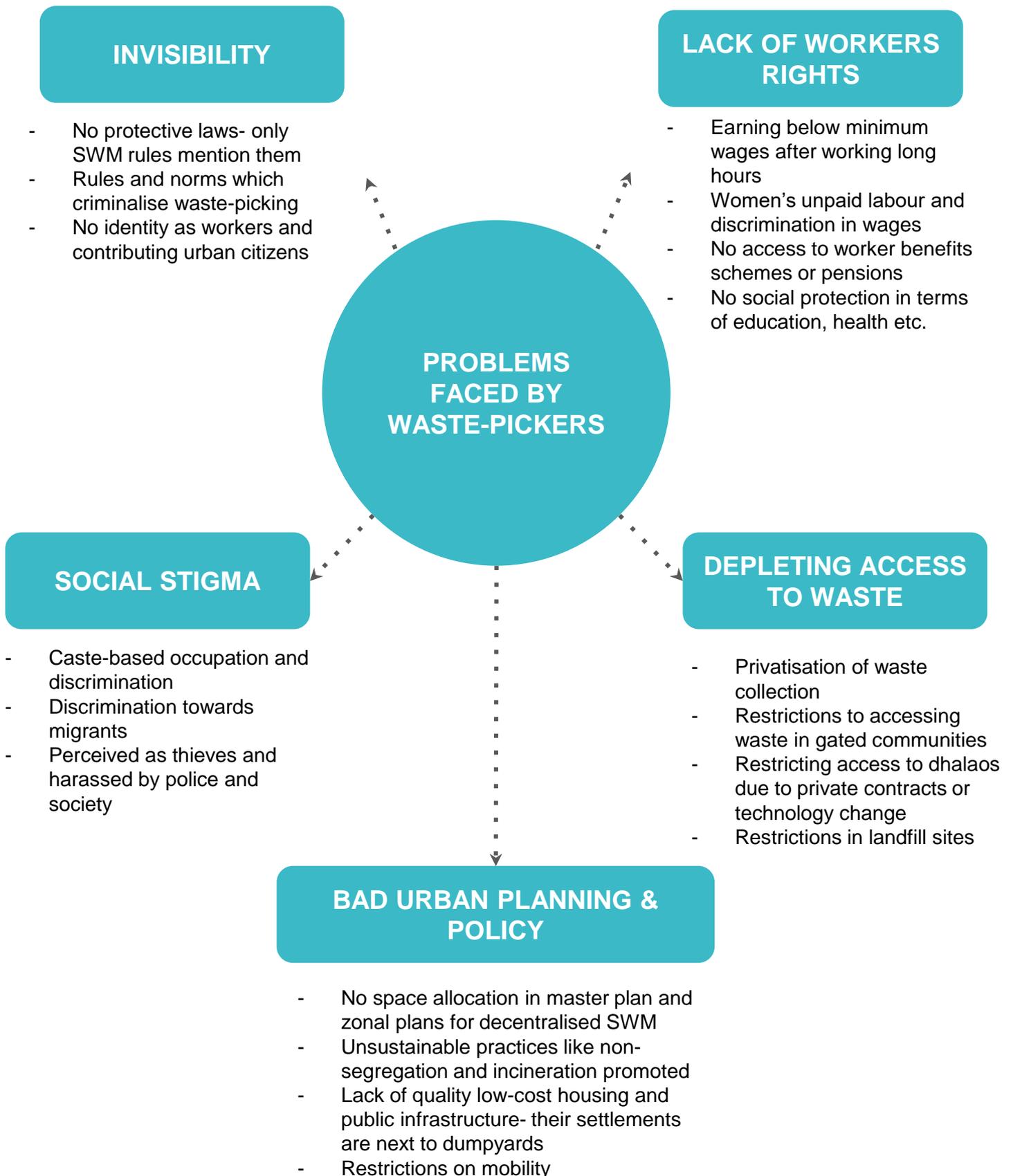
ECONOMIC

- Livelihood source for urban poor
- Saves labour and transport cost for municipality - Minimum wage for unskilled labour * No. of households serviced in Delhi = 3-6 crores annually (Chintan, 2018)

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Efficient recycling- upto 80% of recycling in Delhi done by informal sector (UN, 2010) which:-
- Lowers pressure on landfills and resources
 - Reduces quantity of waste for incineration
 - Reduces emissions equal to removing 176,215 vehicles from roads annually- 3 times more than a Waste to Energy plant (Chintan, 2011)
- Prevents waste from collecting near houses and roads which can cause public health problems

KEY ISSUES



WHAT CAN MPD '41 DO FOR WASTE-PICKERS?

1 RECOGNITION THROUGH ENUMERATION

- Need to push for comprehensive surveys to ascertain the numbers and extent of waste work so that adequate provisions can be given

2 NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL ACCESS TO PUBLIC SPACES FOR SORTING AND STORAGE

- Allocation of space closer to pick-up points to segregate and consolidate waste
- Neighbourhood-level space for wet waste composting for which waste-pickers can be given service fee

3 SPACE FOR DRY WASTE COLLECTION CENTRES / MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY AT NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL

- Size and design of dhalaos keeping in mind the needs of waste-pickers
- Material Recovery Facilities managed by waste-pickers in the model of Bengaluru's Dry Waste Collection Centres.

4 SPACE ALLOCATION TO PROMOTE RECYCLING INDUSTRY

- Space for kabari shops in commercial areas
- Preservation of natural recyclables markets

5 LAND FOR DECENTRALISED SWM AND PRIORITY FOR RECYCLING OVER OTHER TECHNOLOGIES

- Plan to move away from allocating large parcels for landfills or Waste to energy plants
- Rather smaller allocations for decentralised waste management- Eg- Mini-Material recovery facility/ 50 sqm in neighbourhood parks for wet waste composting

References: Centre for Science and Environment (2017), 'Recommendations for Long Term Action Plan for Solid Waste Management in Delhi'.

Chintan Environmental Research and Action Group's publications: 'Wastepickers: Delhi's Forgotten Environmentalists?' (2018) - 'Space for Waste: Planning for the Informal Recycling Sector' (2003)

UN Habitat (2010), 'Solid Waste Management in the World's Cities'

WIEGO publications: - Anne Scheinberg (2012), 'Informal Sector Integration and High-Performance Recycling: Evidence from 20 Cities'

.Wadehra S and Mishra A (2017), 'Delhi's Waste Woes: Is there a way out?' in Economic and Political Weekly. Schindler S et al (2012),

'Delhi's Waste Conflict' in Economic and Political Weekly.