

JAHAN-E-KABADI

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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.



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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 it's own diverse origins remind us that it's possible to create a common voice and language replete with the richness of many partnerships

What Brazil Tells Us

The fifth festival of waste and citizenship. The theme title itself tells you things are different here in the city of Belo Horizonte, in Brazil's North Eastern Minas Gerais state.

The organization that has made this festival possible is ASMARE, an association of catadores, or waste pickers. Over the last thirteen years, since 1993, when it had only 31 members, ASMARE has built up credibility as an organization that has demonstrated the viability of harnessing the government and the wastepickers together for a smoother rise to sustainable development. Now, half a generation later, ASMARE has proved its point and is being replicated.

Latin America has long been known for the way by which the wastepickers have organized themselves, as cooperatives and associations. But now, it is clear that they have succeeded in asserting themselves amongst policy makers too.

Sociologist Sonia Maria Dias, who has been closely involved with the ASMARE movement, has explained how the policy towards waste itself has changed on account of wastepickers. While most of the developing world looks for spaces that include waste recyclers in waste management schemes, the Brazilian experience has resulted in introducing such schemes that work

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well for the wastepickers. In Belo Horizonte, for example, in some areas, the Municipality campaigns with residents to hand over dry waste to the catadores, not a part of its waste management plan, resulting in a door to door recyclable waste collection and increase in revenue.

But Belo Horizonte is not alone. In other cities, the government is actively seeking partnership with

official recycling programs, 19 in partnership with scavenger associations. Indicators analysed showed that the programs resulted in social, and economic gains for scavengers, increased social capital and contributed to reduce waste destined to landfills.” Similar alliances exist elsewhere too.

Notwithstanding the fact that many of these are still fragile, it's important to recognize the larger

them, in their speeches, drove home the point of how important it was to work with important urban players like the waste pickers. It was no mean achievement. How many other countries have actually succeeded in having such a galaxy of star policy makers spending time at a wastepickers festival?

The strategies are used to organize wastepickers globally are linked to the manner in which societies of the region organize themselves. Part of the reason for the success of Brazil is the way poverty and urban growth has been viewed. Slums, for example, have been upgraded, not uprooted and the residents acknowledged for their diverse economic and social contributions. Not all our countries chug along similarly. But if there was a take back from the festival, it was this: elected representatives must be made to see the sheer value of the wastepickers. And if the wastepickers are to profit from this changed view, they had better get organized.



¹RECYCLING PROGRAMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SCAVENGER ASSOCIATIONS AS SUSTAINABILITY FACTOR IN METROPOLITAN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

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wastepickers organizations. This strategy can vary. ASMARE, for example, receives institutional grants, so that it can keep doing what it's good at : organizing waste recyclers. In Sao Paulo, service-delivery partnerships are forged. A recent research tells us¹, “Among 39 municipalities, 23 (59%) develop

Brazilian official trend of recognizing the value these catadore bring to the city and creating strategies to sustain, not supplant that value.

The opening ceremony of the festival saw the Mayor, Ministers of Environment and Of Social Justice, apart form others. Almost all of

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

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