

Table: Waste commodities, their per ton rate and monthly income of a rag picker

S. No.	Waste Item	% in dry waste	Total Tons/Year	Rate /Ton	Income/Year Rag-Pickers (₹)	Income Per Ragpicker/ Month (₹)
1.	Pet Bottle	9.98	4.37	10000	43712.57	3642.71
2.	Tetra Pak Carton	1.99	0.87	5000	4371.25	364.27
3.	Glass	9.98	4.37	1000	4371.25	364.27
4.	Beer Bottle	11.98	5.25	1000	5245.51	437.13
5.	White Paper	13.97	6.12	5000	30598.80	2549.90
6.	Cardboard	11.98	5.25	3000	15736.53	1311.38
7.	Aluminium foil	1.20	0.52	20000	10491.02	874.25
8.	Milk Pouch	3.99	1.75	5000	8742.51	728.54
9.	Metal	1.99	0.87	10000	8742.51	728.54
10.	Scrap Paper (Raddi)	13.97	6.12	5000	30598.80	2549.90
11.	Polybag	11.97	5.25	4000	20982.04	1748.50
12.	Plastic	5.98	2.62	10000	26227.54	2185.63
13.	Tin Can	0.99	0.44	5000	2185.63	182.14
	TOTAL	100	43.8		2,12,005.98	17,667.17



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NEWS LETTER



Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA)

Rag-pickers : Informal Vs Formal Sector

“Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)”- the non-liquid material, more commonly known as trash or garbage, produced by households and institutions (e.g., schools, hospitals, offices, etc.), and non-hazardous material from construction and demolition sites which no longer has any value to the generators of that waste.

“MSW management” refers to the public service of handling this solid waste via collection and subsequent transfer, treatment, disposal and recycling. In Indian cities, due to rapidly increasing population and change in the life style of people, huge quantity of MSW is generated. However, only 30% of that total waste generated is properly disposed of by “formal/organized sector”, which includes municipal corporations and some private contractors in partnership with the municipalities. On remaining waste, “informal/unorganized sector” (consists of independently working rag-pickers, also referred to as scavengers or wastepickers and their families) is taking an advantage.

“Rag pickers from unorganized sector” used to collect the waste from streets/roads or from the places it is available to them and sell it to waste traders. However, due to lack of information and knowledge on richness of the waste they collected, they do not get the actual price of it. Each rag picker under unorganized sector earns hardly ₹3000-4000/- per month, which is also not certain. It again depends on the availability of the waste to them. As a result their life becomes very tough with financial crisis, severe health related issues (for example, many suffer from asthma, diarrhoea, jaundice and severe skin and eye allergies) and poor social conditions (i.e. lack of residency with basic amenities like availability of safe drinking water and sanitation in the city of employment, child labor, harassment by public officials etc.).

Looking at their socio-economic conditions, it is imperative to understand the role of NGOs in organizing the rag pickers from informal to the formal sector.

is a non-governmental, not for profit organization, who is committed to work on solid waste management in Delhi NCR with the vision to create an integrated solid waste management system for Indian urban as well as rural settings and the mission to provide sustainable solutions for solid waste management at different sectors of the society to avoid depletion of our natural resources and improving the socio-economic, health and environmental conditions of rag pickers. With its constant efforts in last 15 years, IPCA has been able to create a network of almost 700 rag pickers in Delhi NCR and transform them from informal sector to formal sector. The rag pickers working under the umbrella of IPCA are known as “Paryavaran Mitra”. The role of IPCA in transforming their social, economic and environmental conditions are further discussed here.

Social Impacts

IPCA supports the Paryavaran Mitra to collect and sort the waste and earn money by connecting them to the recyclers/aggregators. The uniform, ID card and all the equipment (Vehicles, bins, masks, gloves etc.) needed for waste collection and segregation are provided to them. IPCA also provides them the space to segregate their waste within 3 kms from their locations of waste collection. As an advantage, waste pickers need not to carry the waste for longer distance. It reduces their work load and save their time for family and friends, which is a

unique social outcome of transforming these waste pickers from informal to formal sector. IPCA also provides them the facility to dispose their disposable waste and reduce their burden for disposal. That's how IPCA facilitates the Paryavaran Mitra to perform their job more efficiently and satisfactorily.

Aside from, IPCA organizes **health check-up camps** for its Paryavaran Mitra with the support of Tetra Pak India Pvt. Ltd. and provide them free medication to improve their health and family life. In year

2014-15, 1241 people (waste pickers and their family members) have been benefited through our 10 health camps in Delhi NCR. IPCA's **Primary education programme for rag picker's children** with financial support from India Development Services (IDS), Chicago, USA further helps to motivate their children for education. Last but not the least, IPCA also runs capacity building programme for waste picker's community, which further helps in improving their social status.



Economic Impacts

IPCA deputed its Paryavaran Mitra on fixed locations in residential areas, corporate offices, educational institutes and industries to collect the garbage and provides them ownership on the waste they collect. Each Paryavaran Mitra collects waste from 200 households with total approximate weight of 400 Kg. Each door generates almost 2 kg of waste every day on an average. Therefore, every waste picker collects approximately 146 tons of waste each year. Nearly, 50% of the total waste collected is the 'wet' waste, i.e. food waste, goes for composting, 30-35% is the 'dry' waste, i.e. recyclable waste and remaining 15-20 % waste is of no use and goes to land fill site.

Now, the waste pickers are left with dry waste on which they have ownership. IPCA trains its Paryavaran Mitra for segregating each commodity of their waste in efficient way to increase its market value and link them with waste recyclers. Each waste picker has approximately 43.8 tons of dry waste in a year. The dry waste is composed of PET bottles, Tetra Pak cartons, glass, Beer bottles, white papers, cardboards, aluminum foils, milk pouch, raddi, polybags and plastics. Their % composition, per ton rates and per month income of waste pickers under IPCA umbrella are tabulated ahead.

The data directs that each waste picker working under IPCA's

network is earning roughly ₹17,667/- per month as gross income. Their expenses towards the rent of godowns, rickshaw and its maintenance are around ₹1200/- per month. Therefore, their net income from selling of dry waste is nearly ₹16,477/-, which is considered as reasonably good for illiterate/disenfranchised people live in urban India to run their family life. Moreover, the source of income is regular for them as fixed territories are allocated to them for waste collection. That's the way, IPCA creates these micro-entrepreneurs, who depend financially upon the richness of the solid waste stream they collect.

Environmental impacts

IPCA's door to door waste collection service does not leave any littering in their project areas, which helps in keeping the environment of the areas clean. Further, 85% of the total waste, IPCA collects (organic and dry recyclable) goes for recycling, which helps in reducing the burden on landfill sites and protect our environment from deterioration. The recycling of waste into useful products helps in saving precious natural resources, i.e. trees, water, soil and oils. It also reduces the consumption of chemicals, which may affect the environment.

In spite of all above, IPCA's mission to improve the life of underprivileged communities helped in improving the environmental conditions and life style of the waste picker's communities. Most of the waste pickers godowns are now equipped with proper drinking water and sanitation facilities. However, proper drainage system needs to be installed to further improving their living environmental conditions of these communities, which is not feasible without any government support system.

Finally, it is to affirm that waste pickers transformed from unorganized sector to the organized one know, from where to get the waste?, what price of their waste commodity to get? And to whom they sell their waste? They also feel protected from social harassment, from corporates and police as they have ID cards, uniforms etc. Thus they now have social as well as financial security. Their improved financial condition also help in improving their life style and environmental conditions.

