



Bharatiya Kabari Mazdoor Adhikar Manch

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PRESS RELEASE

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY, AN IRONY FOR DELHI'S 3 LAKH RECYCLERS AND WASTE PICKERS

Jantar Mantar, New Delhi:

On the occasion of International Labour Day, thousands of waste pickers, wholesale junk dealers and recyclers protested today against Privatization of waste in Delhi under the banner of Bhartiya Kabari Mazdoor Adhikar Manch (BKAM). BKAM is a consortium of NGOs representing the wastepicker community and associations of wholesale junk dealers and recyclers.



The dharna highlighted the contribution of the informal waste-recycling sector towards recycling.

- Out of 1800 tonnes of glass bottles thrown daily by Delhi 75% of bottles are reused by the informal sector and only 25% newly manufactured,
- almost 100% recycling by the informal sector of the 2000 tonnes of dry paper discarded daily in Delhi and,
- between 20-59% of the Municipal Solid Waste produced daily by Delhi is recycled by the informal sector
- Waste that goes to landfills produced green houses gases. Recyclers prevent this
- Recycling is self-help. Many of the poorest people eat because they can pick waste. They chose not to be beggars but live with dignity.

In spite of this crucial contribution, the entire informal waste recycling sector is ignored in government policies. The latest policies to privatize waste collection and disposal is one example of how poor policy making harms the sector, though job losses, conversion of small self-sustaining activities into wage labour at best, and very poor recycling rates.



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The private firms must achieve only 20% segregation of municipal solid waste in the 8 year of their contract. In contrast, the informal sector already segregates over 50% on a daily basis.

A delegation of BKAM presented its Charter of Demands protesting against privatization to Smt. Sheila Dixit, Chief Minister of Delhi seeking her intervention. The Charter of Demands was also given to Shri Oscar Fernandes, Minister of State for Labour & Employment, Smt. Meira Kumar, Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, Shri Abdul Rehman Antulay, Minister for Minority Affairs and Ms. Leyla Tegmo-Reddy, Director & ILO representative in India. The recyclers have been in discussion with Smt Sheila Dixit for over 2 years and are disappointed at her lack of commitment to the issue.



The Charter of Demands calls for:

- renegotiation of the privatization agreement ensuring the informal sector's legal right over recyclable waste,
- clear contract stipulations that 40 listed items do not belong to the private contractor,
- ensured space for segregation of waste at the dhalos,
- payment to private contractors only for wet and inert waste
- recognition of the entire informal waste recycling sector with extension of social security to them and
- their inclusion in the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules 2000.

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