



Inclusive,
Sustainable,
Equitable
Growth for All



CHINTAN
ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH
AND ACTION GROUP

Chintan is a registered NGO that converts waste into social wealth. We are accredited with the UN-ECOSOC.

Our Vision

Inclusive, sustainable, equitable growth for all

Our Mission

To reduce ecological footprints and increase environmental justice through systemic change, through partnerships, capacity building, sustainable, scalable models on the ground, advocacy and research.



Why is Our Work Important?

As India urbanizes, solid waste is quickly becoming a major environmental and health concern. India generates about 100,000 tons per day each day, which is poorly handled. Consequently, India's greenhouse emissions from waste are twice as high compared to the rest of Asia.

On the other hand, over 20 million people, mostly in the informal sector, depend on waste handling and recycling for their livelihoods. Most of them survive because of their inherent skills, intuitive business sense and hard work. They include wastepickers, itinerant buyers, waste dealers and reproprocessors. They provide India with the only recycling system it has, averting over 3 times more greenhouses gas than any formal waste project receiving carbon credits. Unfortunately, their work is hazardous and unrecognized. Recycling, therefore, has a human cost.

Chintan works in partnership with the informal recycling sector to address two concerns: the environment and the recyclers. We work to create green jobs. Chintan defines green jobs in an Indian context as jobs that benefit the environment and that are decent jobs, ensuring the safety and rights of workers. Our work offers India a greener, just present and future.

What Do We Do?

Chintan's work is based on partnerships with a range of actors, including the government, other NGOs, organizations of the poor, municipalities, research bodies, students, universities, donor agencies, bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies, and the residents of the cities we work in. However, our grassroots partnership with the informal recycling sector particularly informs all of our work, from international advocacy to local negotiations with officials. Chintan's work is based on 5 programmes:

1. A Voice for Waste

This programme is run in partnership with Safai Sena, (Army of Cleaners/Recyclers) a registered association of recyclers, based on grassroots leadership. Chintan's role is to build the capacities of waste recyclers to understand the value of their work to the environment, organize for green jobs and advocate for better policies both locally and nationally. We help them through training, organizing, knowledge sharing, facilitating livelihood opportunities and encouraging grassroots leadership.



2. Scavengers to Managers

This programme creates or facilitates green jobs at the bottom of the pyramid. Such jobs include doorstep collection of trash, composting, PET bottle recycling, electronic waste collection and handling etc. We acknowledge that waste recyclers of all types are skilled entrepreneurs without the social capital that would help them break out of informality and exploitation.

3. No Child in Trash

Approximately 20% of the wastepicker population in the Delhi region comprises children. How do we address this double violation of child labor and lack of access to education? Chintan's goal is to enable children to wean away from work and into an appropriate education to help them gain the skills and capacity to make choices about their future. Chintan, along with Safai Sena, runs a number of learning centres. Over 60% of our children have been mainstreamed in government schools.



4. Knowledge Power

Chintan is constantly pushing for policy shifts that are inclusive of the urban poor and based on Extended Producer Responsibility. To do this, we research areas with the potential of significant policy impact or those that are likely to deepen public understanding about the issues we work on. Chintan is widely regarded for its knowledge products including research and awareness publications, and we disseminate our findings both through Safai Sena and at the highest policy levels.

5. Low Carbon Futures

This programme enables institutional waste generators to reduce their waste footprint. Chintan undertakes employee awareness, waste audits, waste recycling, and helps institutionalize the change. Our partners range from hotels and malls to offices, and we customize our work to ensure it is practical, appropriate and genuinely generating environmental and social benefits.

Our Impacts

Chintan has been able to make change in many ways:

Helping people help themselves: Over 20,000 waste recyclers touched by our work

Reducing child labour: Over 2000 wastepicker children have accessed education in the last 5 years alone.

Recycling: Chintan handles over 15 tons of waste everyday in just Delhi. Aggregated, Safai Sena members handle over 600 tons daily.

Helping recyclers self-represent: Chintan has helped set up various organizations run by the informal sector, including Safai Sena, which involves municipal waste recyclers and 4R, which is comprised of e-waste dismantlers

Changing the laws and policy:

Chintan's advocacy has resulted in the inclusion of the informal recycling sector in the National Environment Policy, 2006, the Plastic Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011 and the E-Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2011. These rules have developed a fresh approach using Extended User Responsibility and the informal sector. The Masterplan of Delhi 2021 also discusses space for the informal recycling sector.



Green Your Karma

Think of Chintan as an organization that helps you shrink your ecological footprint, while also enabling you to improve the work of others, who are recycling your trash. **Here are some steps you can take to begin with. For more details or other ideas, contact us:**

Donate notebooks, woolens, school uniforms, water bottles, caps, crayons etc for our schools.

Donate all your paper and other trash to us. We will recycle it.

Sponsor a teacher or a social worker—we really need it.

Call Chintan to handle your waste, whether you are a residential area or a tourist resort

Help us run extracurricular activities for wastepicker children

Volunteer with our *No Child in Trash* Programme as a doctor, teacher, story teller, arts trainer, theater trainer, motivator, counselor and quality monitor.

Hold a **Recycling Week** in your workplace to spread awareness—we will help you!

Reach out to wastepickers and kabaris in your neighbourhood—ask us how, we will support you.

Give us old uniforms in good condition for our Scavengers to Managers Programme

Come up with other ideas and let us know how we can help!

Our Resources

We offer the following resources:

Knowledge: Through our publications, library, discussions with our team, our photo library, and waste walks.

Creativity and Skill Building: Through our internships and volunteering opportunities, where individuals are expected to join the team but handle their own project, typically to find innovative solutions to challenges on the ground. A range of skills and interests are welcomed.

Services: Chintan can recycle your waste, run a doorstep waste collection system, teach schools and teachers to become greener and help you find solutions to environmental problems.



Contact us:

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