

GreenCycle Innovations Ltd.

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Topic Title: Ragpickers at the Forefront: Transforming Rural Waste Management

Audience: Stakeholders in Sustainable Development and Waste Management

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

Executive Summary

This paper explores the possibility of formalizing ragpickers, marginalized waste collectors in rural India, into the formal waste management system. Ragpickers play a crucial role but need more social acceptance and economic opportunities.

The current system, reliant on panchayats, is inefficient and has poor waste segregation. A pilot program in select panchayats is proposed to assess the feasibility of formalization.

Key components of the pilot program:

1. Identify and register ragpickers to understand their needs and skills.
2. Provide training on safe waste handling, segregation techniques, and entrepreneurship.
3. Encourage the formation of self-help groups to empower ragpickers and improve bargaining power.
4. Collaborate with panchayats to establish designated collection points for segregated waste.
5. Conduct public awareness campaigns to address social stigma and promote ragpickers' inclusion.

Potential benefits:

1. Improved waste segregation and recycling through training and infrastructure.
2. Enhanced livelihoods for ragpickers with stable income, better working conditions, and social security.
3. Reduced environmental impact through efficient waste management practices.
4. Societal benefits like promoting social inclusion, reducing poverty, and empowering marginalized communities.

Recommendation: Integrating ragpickers offers a promising approach to improving waste management, creating sustainable livelihoods, and achieving rural India's sustainable waste management goals. The success of this pilot program can pave the way for broader implementation.