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RECYCLING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT

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Contribution of the waste pickers of Dhaka city in recycling and waste management

Waste pickers of Dhaka City collect wastes from households, streets, dustbins, dump sites and sell those to the recycling chain. It is a self-employment opportunity for the urban poor. According to an estimate of Grambangla Unnayan Committee there are 400,000 waste pickers in Bangladesh. Dhaka, a city of around 18 million people and 360 km² area generates more than 10,000 tons of solid waste every day. The rate of per capita solid waste generation is 0.56 kg. About 15% of the total generated waste is being recycled by the waste pickers. Government sources mentioned that only in Dhaka city, 120,000 poor people are engaged in recycling and reusing wastes and from that business, the country earns approximately US\$ 0.2 billion per year. Waste pickers also work with more than 12,000 push vans for collecting kitchen and other inorganic wastes from the household level. Waste pickers' efforts help create thousands of jobs in recycling industry and reduce the use of virgin resources. Bangladesh earns millions of dollars from exporting recycled plastic bottles. Using plastic and rubber wastes now more than 1000 factories are in production and creating jobs and saving national import expenses. Recycling and reusing of garment factories' wastes created hundreds of new shops, factories and about 150,000 new jobs. Waste pickers contribute free labor for waste collection, recycling and mitigation of climate change effects, but their contribution is invisible in official statistics and they are excluded from the national social security system.

Biography

A K M Maksud has completed his MSS degree in Sociology from the University of Dhaka and is a student of LLB from the University of London. He has worked as Team Leader for more than 50 social research studies for Government, UN agencies and International NGOs. For the last 19 years, he has been working as the Chief Executive of Grambangla Unnayan Committee (GUC), a nationally reputed NGO.

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