ROLE OF GENDER IN WASTE MANAGEMENT

Gender perspectives on waste in India, Indonesia, The Philippines & Vietnam

IN SUPPORT OF SDGS:

COMMISSIONED BY:
GA Circular

- Research & Data Analytics
- Strategy and Policy Advisory
- Technical Assistance
- Stakeholder Engagement
**Critical Questions**
for the Role of Gender in Waste Management around ASEAN

- **Incomes**
  Are there income differences based on gender for similar occupations?

- **Perceptions**
  Might women and men have different perceptions of waste management?

- **Favoured Occupations**
  What occupations are favoured by men and women within the waste sector?

- **Occupational Challenges**
  What are the gender-specific occupational challenges while working with waste?

- **Roles**
  What role does gender play with regard to household waste management?

- **Participation Challenges**
  What are some perceived challenges to participation by women in these occupations?

- **Interventions**
  Are there any gender-specific interventions that may improve the waste landscape?
Key Findings of Gender Study

01 While gender differences are significant, the conventional challenges of gender inequality don’t apply.

02 Women participate both individually and alongside men (as a family unit) in the waste sector.

03 Key interventions suggested are intended to empower, support and enable women and the general waste sector rather than formalise the nature of employment.
Gender Participation in Waste Value Chain

Sorting is typically a woman’s task

Women are employed in repetitive and time-consuming tasks while men tend to participate in “heavy” duties.

Women staffed junk shops

Women often co-owned businesses with their spouses or run them as a family operation.

They perform the administrative tasks.

Formal waste work is dominated by men, except in parts of India

Salaries do not vary between genders, but it is easier for men to seek formal employment in waste collection.

Equipment and/or vehicles vary by gender in all countries except Vietnam

Women tend to use protective gear because they handle wet waste more than the men do.
Challenges Faced by Women in the Waste Industry

**Physical Challenges**

- “Unable to handle large amounts or bulky items” (reported by men and women)
- “Lack of access to equipment” (reported by women)

Men and women are at risk of contracting respiratory illnesses from exposure to toxic and unhygienic materials.

**Safety**

- “Lack of safety” (reported by women)

Waste dumping tends to occur in early hours when it is still dark

Exposed to crime when having to work in alleyways and poorly maintained areas of city

**Health Risks**

Many do not have health insurance coverage, and have limited access to adequate health care

“Please cite the source accurately.”

**Social Stigma**

- “They (women) must tend to the house/children” (reported by men and women in the Philippines, and men in Indonesia)
- “It is inappropriate for women to work as waste sector workers” (reported by men and women)
- “Low social status” and Lack of respect in society
Key Insights

Ownership
Few women own and operate businesses at the end of the waste value chain.

Family Businesses
Working in waste is often a family enterprise.

Migration
Most of the informal sector are individuals that have moved to cities from other parts of the country.

Communications
Women resort primarily to informal channels of communications and networks.
Opportunities of Intervention to Support Women

**Societal**
Recognising women, Improving social status and removing stigma

**Operational/ Technical Assistance**
Capacity building, Providing vehicles, Training and awareness, Financing, Health and safety

**Other Interventions**
Semi-formalising the informal sector, Converting migrant status, Providing social benefits, Building awareness of their rights