





WASTE IN DELHI

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF DELHI'S WASTE SITUATION

INTRODUCTION

WASTE IS A BORROWED CONCEPT

Indian homes didn't have a dustbin for the longest time — some still don't. **Households utilised everything**, and never believed in the concept of 'waste'. Even choosing to call it waste brings in a bias - to view it as a problem to solve, rather than a resource.

Indian homes have long prioritized value for money by trying to **ensure the durability and longevity of material things they own**. The prohibitive costs of obtaining certain resources and amenities led families to pool funds and share resources within the community. For example, families would buy one set large utensils to share, and borrow whenever one is hosting a gathering.

Repair skills have been an essential component of this frugal culture. 20-30 years ago, every Indian household had a toolbox and a network of cobblers, tailors, and mechanics formed the backbone of a robust repair economy. But now with hands-on and repair skills either considered a vocation for the uneducated and with replacements becoming easier, **the repair culture is steadily declining**. The mounds of waste keep growing.





LOCAL INSIGHT

SHARE AND REPAIR

INDIA

With the fast-moving lifestyle in the city, people have started to buy cheap products that can be used and thrown away easily. With this throw-away culture, people stopped associating values to their objects which leads to even more waste generation in the city.

In ancient times when appliances were not accessible for all, families in the neighbourhood would huddle around a shared television in the evenings or on Sundays — taking great care of the products to extend its life.

LOCAL INSIGHT

MASTER RECYCLERS

INDIA

With incredibly cheap labor, India reaches recycling capacities beyond even the most progressive recycling nations in the West.

Image credits: iStock

WHAT DESIGN CAN DO **NO WASTE CHALLENGE** 2020-2021



A BRIEF SUMMARY OF **DELHI'S WASTE SITUATION**

CHALLENGES

MOUNTING WASTE

Delhi alone produces around **10,000 tonnes of garbage** every day. A huge portion of this waste is being dumped in three overflowing landfill sites - Bhalswa, Okhla and Ghazipur — which exceeded their maximum capacities over a decade ago.

So far, the issue of waste has largely been addressed through a “mopping approach”. **Lack of collective will and action** makes it impossible to solve pressing issues at their core and instead channels efforts into superficial **short-term fixes**.

In 2016, the government came up with the new Solid Waste Management Rules (SWM). The rules encourage centralised treatment plans such as waste to energy, the present state of which is not robust in the country. There is a lack of emphasis on decentralised management of waste and **the informal sector has been considerably neglected**.



LOCAL INSIGHT

'USE AND THROW'

INDIA

Today, buying things is getting easier — cheaper commodities are a click away on numerous e-commerce portals. Brands manufacture products which bank on a fast-consumption culture with a declining sense of durability and value for money.

India's e-commerce packaging industry was worth US \$32 billion in 2015 and is expected to grow rapidly to about US \$73 billion by 2020. Flipkart, for instance, does around 8 million shipments every month. At present, there is no law in India that regulates e-commerce packaging.

Image credits: iStock



**WHERE DESIGN CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IN DELHI**

TAKE LESS

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN



USE FEWER NATURAL RESOURCES
AND CONSUME MORE MINDFULLY

In the context of India's booming use and throw culture, how might design inspire **mindful consumption** and **rekindle our association with objects**?

There is so much we can extract from our traditions. Yet, we regard sustainability as a new-found concept. How might design **instil pride in local traditions and systems** that innately build on sustainable practices?

More organisations see **education as a way to propagate sustainable living**. How might design help educate the younger generation to understand and embrace these values?



Image Credits: GARBOLOGY 101

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GET INSPIRED

GARBOLGY 101

INDIA

Based out of Auroville, Wasteless is a team of interdisciplinary educators who developed an interactive activity based educational toolkit for ages 6-12 years.

The toolkit is focussed on stimulating analysis, critical thinking and action — divided into themes like conscious consumerism, resource conservation and systems thinking — each providing a unique perspective on the generation and responsible management of waste.

[Learn More →](#)

“Children will be the biggest consumers of tomorrow, and they will inherit the mess we are creating today. Children are curious and have a close connection to nature and their direct environment. This relationship offers hope and opportunity.

— Team Wasteless



Image Credits: <https://5waraj.in>

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GET INSPIRED

5waraj

INDIA

5waraj works with schools, universities and professional bodies to raise awareness on India's local, traditional cultures and their innate connection to the local environment.

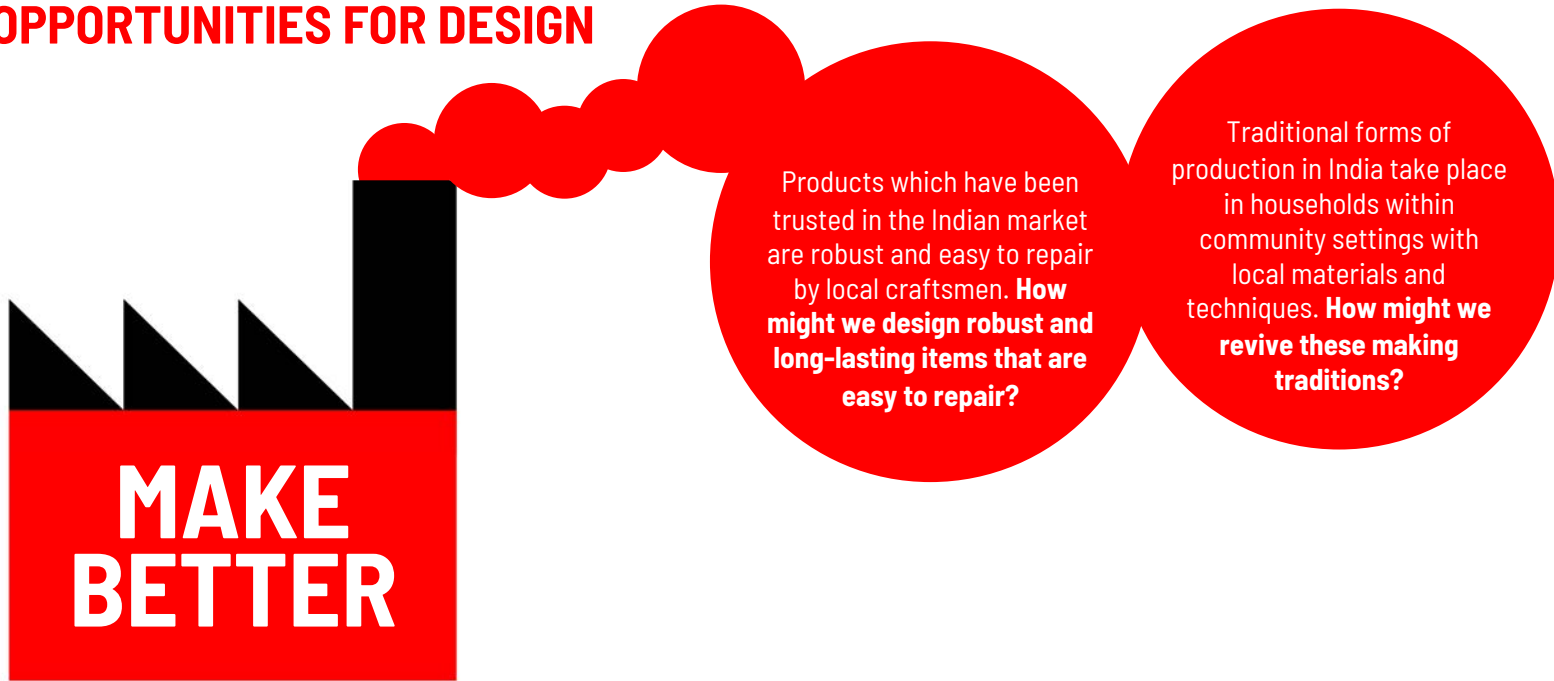
By 'culture' they mean five key constituent elements, namely, Bhasha, Bhojan, Bhesh, Bhavan, Bhajan (Dialects, Diets, Dresses, Dwellings, Dances & Songs™ – henceforth referred to as [5 'D's].)

They do this to facilitate a back-to-the-roots movement impacting sustainable lifestyles and sustainable cities, reduce carbon-footprints and decongest cities.

[Learn More →](#)

MAKE BETTER

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN



How can we make products and materials that are kept in use or regenerate natural systems? We have highlighted some key opportunities, but there are plenty more! Refer to the global brief for further inspiration.



GET INSPIRED

DIFFERNITURE

INDIA

With her furniture brand Differniture designer Aakriti Kumar connects century old wood-working craft with reclaimed wood. The wood that is used for the furniture pieces comes from old floorboards to dismantled container crates. Using ancient techniques with a modern approach Differniture looks to revisit furniture making in India.

Image Credits: <https://differniture.com>



**PHENKO
NAHI,
JODO!**



GET INSPIRED

FeviKwik

INDIA

Just One Drop Does The Job! Back in 1985, when instant all-use adhesives were unheard of in India, Pidilite manufactured and introduced FeviKwik – a one drop instant super adhesive.

At ₹5 a piece (USD 0.07), [FeviKwik](https://www.pidilite.com/our-brands/fevikwik/)'s super-fast drying application and long-lasting nature has made quick, easy and super affordable repairs possible on the go. Their quirky ad campaigns urge people to 'Choosing Fixing over Discarding' promoting repair as a fun and effortless activity.

Image Credits: <http://www.pidilite.com/our-brands/fevikwik/>

WASTE NOTHING

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DESIGN



How can we dispose of goods more responsibly and treat waste as a resource? We have highlighted some key opportunities, but there are plenty more! Refer to the global brief for further inspiration.

The informal sector employs efficient collection and recycling processes, which have evolved through years of small scale innovation. **How might design build on and scale up these innovations that already exist in the informal sector?**

For many, recycling is often the only source of marginal income. Formalising the informal sector often tends to block many of these small time operators from access to livelihoods. **How might design play a role in supporting these localized systems?**

Waste management is highly complex and it can be overwhelming as an individual to make sense of it all. **How might design make information around waste segregation and treatment more actionable?**



Image Credits: Daily Dump

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GET INSPIRED

DAILY DUMP

INDIA

Fifty-seven year old Poonam Bir Kasturi is a product designer; determined to explore alternatives to combat waste. This led her to design the khamba, a terracotta composter which helps homes compost their kitchen waste. Daily Dump was launched in 2006 — a design-driven home-composting label that is handcrafted by artisans from different small-scale industries.

Daily Dump's products and services offer solutions for decentralised waste management in homes, communities, offices and public spaces in India.

[Learn more →](#)



GET INSPIRED

SAAHAS Zero Waste INDIA

Saahas is a non-profit organization working in the field of waste management.

Since 2001, Saahas has been helping build communities across rural and urban India that manage their waste at source by reducing, reusing and recycling their waste and achieving 90% resource recovery.

"When waste is managed at source, it becomes a resource." - Team Saahas

[Learn More →](#)



Image Credits: SAAHAS Zero Waste

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REFERENCES/LEARN MORE

SOURCES AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Here are the main sources used for creating this briefing:

Climate Movement in India

- [How social media is strengthening the youth climate movement in India](#)
- [Indian shoppers open to brands that endorse sustainability and trust](#)

Consumerism

- [Why We Need More: Insights Into Our Consumption Patterns](#)
- [Online shopping means cutting billions of trees](#)
- [Conscious consumption – Spotlight on India](#)

Production

- [5 factors depleting the Indian handicraft industry](#)
- [Brief Encounters With 9 Exceptional Social Entrepreneurs](#)
- [Alternativism - A state-of-mind for true sustainability](#)

Repair Ecosystems

- [Why Delhi's Gaffar market is prospering as a mobile repairing hub](#)
- [Livemint Year-End Special: Repair economy 2.0](#)

Solid Waste Management in Delhi

- [Delhi's solid waste: a systemic failure](#)
- [Mapping Delhi Landfills](#)
- [Are the Three Giant Landfills in Delhi Even Legal?](#)
- [With three landfills shut, Delhi becomes overflowing trash can](#)

Policy

- [Government notifies new solid waste management rules](#)
- [Solid Waste Management Rules PDF](#) (English version - page 51 onwards)

Informal Systems

- ['Clean India' Ignores Ragpickers Who Work For Little Money & No Rights](#)
- [Down in the Dumps: The Tale of Delhi's Waste Pickers](#)