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# Trash! On Ragpicker Children and Recycling

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Recycling is a huge - and hugely effective - industry in India. The reason it works so well is that it's driven by poverty, its labour-intensiveness satisfied by armies of street children who earn a pittance from 'Golden Dustmen' by picking through other folks' rubbish and salvaging the recyclable bits. So, by keeping the kids on the streets, the streets are kept clean - well, cleaner than otherwise. The narrative strand of this intriguing book follows a few weeks in the lives of two such 'ragpicker' children and especially documents the endeavours of some organisations to get their activities recognised as the important economic contribution that they are and to have them properly rewarded. The uncertainties and dangers of street life, as well as its warmth and humour, are sympathetically portrayed. And the text is laced with facts and improving thoughts and messages, giving an overall impression of a sort of Indian **Waterbabis** with Doas-youwouldbedoneby and Bedone-byasyoudid well to the fore. To readers used to standard English, the language limps a little, but the authors manage to create a warm enthusiasm for a world in which recycling is an essential part of everyday life. Here is a story ripe for dramatisation - or perhaps for *bande dessin?e* treatment, and one from which our local authorities could learn a lot before they consign our 'waste' newspaper to landfill because it won't fetch 'an economic price'.

Running Order:

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