

# What A Waste!

Simple ways to tackle what seems a Huge Problem



**A Project of:**

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Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment  
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The way we manage our Solid Waste presently .....



All types of waste, including medical and toxic wastes get dumped in and around dustbins, even though it is exclusively for household waste. This causes major health hazards and public nuisance.



Disposal of enormous quantities of waste daily is a very big problem. As not enough landfills are available, waste is dumped indiscriminately. A large proportion is dumped on farmlands around the city, thus exposing farmers, who use this waste for manure, to infections, besides polluting the area.



Door to door waste collection from households is gaining momentum, but waste is still not being segregated. Workers who clean up this mess daily are exposed to major health risks in dealing with this situation



Removal of unsegregated waste from street bins is an highly hazardous operation and exposes loaders daily to highly infectious diseases. Segregation of waste at source would ensure that this removal process would become a clean operation.





Our Simple efforts could make a huge difference to our city's environment and public health..... Segregate, it's that simple.



Kitchen Waste can be composted into rich manure. Over half the waste we generate can be composted. Fail to segregate kitchen waste and we needlessly lose valuable nutrients for our gardens and farms.



Segregation helps recover recyclable material like plastics and metals. Give it to waste-pickers. It prevents their need to search rubbish and limits their exposure to diseases.



Highly infectious medical and toxic waste, such as diapers, sanitary pads, syringes, used or expired medicines, batteries, etc., should never be mixed with garbage. Segregation helps the safe management of this hazardous waste.

**Adopting such simple steps daily, will help us secure a safe and healthy environment.**



Certainly waste disposal anywhere and everywhere will be a thing of the past.



Segregation will add value to waste and make large composting operations viable. Garbage dumps will become organic manure 'factories'!



Vermicomposting will add value to manure with Earth's best friend, Earthworms, coming to our aid in cleaning up our mess sustainably.

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# Empowering Pourakarmikas: A Sustainable approach to Solid Waste Management of Urban Areas

Pourakarmikas (solid waste workers, also known as Safai Karmacharis) form a critical force in the maintenance of a healthy environment in urban areas. Besides the very challenging nature of their work, the conditions they operate in expose them to a variety of highly infectious and toxic wastes causing very adverse impacts on their health and psychology. It is in the city's interest to care for their health, working and living conditions, as this would enable them to clean our streets and neighbourhoods daily, thus ensuring a healthy environment for all.

A variety of progressive initiatives to manage solid waste locally and sustainably have been initiated in recent years and with differing results. It is a widely accepted that it is only with segregation of solid waste at source that any meaningful higher end solutions to manage high volumes of the city's waste daily can be achieved. Segregation helps us move quickly towards environmentally sensible waste management approaches such as composting, vermicomposting, scientific landfilling or any other appropriate technological intervention. To ensure that waste is segregated at source there is need for communicating the steps to every household and neighbourhood, business and commercial establishment, industrial areas and construction facilities. Only a trained workforce can communicate the importance of this approach to citizens, and this would in time ensure waste segregation becomes a civic discipline. Pourakarmikas are ably suited to deliver this important function.

Environment Support Group (ESG), a non-profit organization, has engaged in training a small section of this workforce in Bangalore on a model basis, and the results are encouraging. A variety of Community Education Material have been developed as part of this initiative and these include Instructional Flip Charts, Functional Neighbourhood Maps and Calendars with Waste Segregation Messages, a Resource Manual for Trainers and an entertaining educative Video Documentary as well. Pourakarmikas have been trained in the use of these materials in communicating with households and neighbourhoods. Daily implementation of the steps suggested by them would ensure that waste is not only segregated, a small daily ritual for everybody, but also that waste recovery and management becomes environmentally sensitive and economically sustainable.

ESG has been supported in this initiative by the Indo-Norwegian Environment Programme of the Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology, in collaboration with the Karnataka State Department of Environment and Bangalore Mahanagara Palike. The Human Health and Well Being Division of the United Nations Environment Programme has also aided in initiating this model.



The appalling work conditions of Pourakarmikas (PKs) expose them to disease and injury frequently and cause adverse impacts on their psychology.



Empowerment trainings included interaction with Bank Managers on thrift and savings and Labour Lawyers on workers occupational rights.



Frequent health check-ups of PKs are mandated by law, but rarely conducted. As part of the project ESG has conducted special health camps for the workers, and provided them with Personal Medical Health Cards.



Medical Counselling has also been initiated systematically.

Community Educational Material developed as part of this project is based on frequent consultations with PKs and keeping in view ease of use by them in instructing communities on solid waste management.

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