



SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA - ROLE OF GRAM PANCHAYATS

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ABSTRACT :

Unprecedented growth of market-oriented economy and the consumerist culture of the people is leading to unmanageable waste generation. Till now such a situation is seen in most cities and towns that were characterised as fastest growing economies. But now this problem has crept into the rural areas. The peripheral areas of cities and towns are bearing the brunt of indiscriminate and unmanageable waste generation. Sanitation and street cleaning is one of the basic functions of a Gram Panchayat. This paper focuses on the role of Gram Panchayats in implementing the Solid Waste Management in the light of Swatchh Bharat Mission.

KEYWORDS : *Unprecedented, Peripheral, Indiscriminate, Management, Mission etc.,*

“Take responsibility for the waste you generate”.

INTRODUCTION:

The domestic waste generated in rural households of India is increasingly becoming an issue of serious concern. Though Solid waste generated in rural areas is predominantly organic and biodegradable, it is becoming a major problem as the waste management is not segregated with a scientific approach. Hence there should be a functional waste management system in every Gram Panchayat so that domestic waste is handled responsibly.

Why Gram Panchayats have to take up Waste Management ?

The following strong reasons may be cited as to why gram panchayats have to take up the responsibility for waste management.

- Rural sanitation is one of the areas earmarked for local bodies under the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution and it is also incorporated and elaborated in the Seventy-Third Constitution Amendment Act, 1992.
- Solid Waste Management Rules- 2016, clearly states that the rules mentioned under the SWM Rules- 2016 are applicable to gram panchayats also.
- Gram Panchayats have the power to decide what kind of a waste management system shall be technically sound, economically non-intimidating and socially acceptable.
- Because of the lifestyle changes and exposure people get through television and other media, waste generation in rural areas is increasingly becoming a medical emergency.

- The Swatchh Bharat Mission campaigns have made most Indian villages to become Open Defecation Free (ODF). The next big step is to move towards waste management, which has come to be known as ODF-Plus.
- Local government institutions, Gram Panchayats should endeavour to provide all its residents a clean and healthy environment.

Responsibilities of Gram Panchayats in Solid Waste Management:

Gram Panchayats in India aspire to become clean by implementing a Solid Waste Management system. The point here is not dumping or disposing - but managing. There has to be a scientific approach in waste management. The following key responsibilities are to be performed by every Gram Panchayat so that a perfect Solid Waste Management system is established.

- Every Gram Panchayat has to arrange for door-to-door collection of segregated solid waste from all households including commercial, institutional and other non-residential premises. Such a system can ensure hygienic conditions.
- Transport segregated bio-degradable waste to the processing facilities like compost plant, bi-methanation plant or any such facility. Preference shall be given for on-site (home-based) processing of such waste.
- Waste generators are to be educated not to litter, i.e, throw or dispose of any waste and to segregate the waste at source as directed and handover it to waste pickers identified by the local body.
- The Panchayat has to establish material recovery facilities or secondary storage facilities with sufficient space for sorting of recyclable materials to enable authorised waste collectors to separate recyclables from the waste such as paper, plastic, metal, glass, textile etc.,
- Segregation and sale of recyclable wastes is to be done in an organised manner.
- Identify waste deposition centres for domestic hazardous waste and give direction for waste generators to deposit domestic hazardous waste at the identified centre for its safe disposal.
- Sufficient training is to be provided to waste pickers and waste collectors on solid waste management.
- The Panchayat has to involve communities in waste management and promotion of home composting, bio-gas generation, decentralised processing of waste at community level subject to control of odour and maintenance of hygienic conditions around the facility.
- The use of compost has to replace chemical fertilizer in a stipulated period.
- The Panchayat has to make sure that hardly 10-15% of waste ends up in a sanitary landfill. The Sanitary landfill should not be considered as a place for dumping.
- The Panchayat has to facilitate construction, operation and maintenance of solid waste processing facilities and associated infrastructure on their own or with private sector participation or through any agency for optimum utilisation of various components of solid waste adopting suitable technology.
- The Panchayat has to educate workers including contract workers and supervisors for door-to-door collection of segregated waste and transporting the unmixed waste during primary and secondary transportation to processing or disposal facility.
- Provide personal protection equipment including uniform, fluorescent jacket, hand gloves, raincoats, appropriate footwear and masks to all workers handling solid waste.
- The panchayat has to make sure that the village streets, street corners and vacant places are clean and every one cooperates to maintain cleanliness.
- The panchayat has to prescribe from time to time user fee as deemed appropriate and collect the fees from the waste generators on its own or through authorised agency.
- The panchayat has to take care in procuring suitable sites for setting up solid waste processing facility and sanitary land fill facilities.

- There shall be a village water and sanitation committee (VWSE) as the executive authority to plan, collect, treat and dispose kitchen wastes and other domestic waste generated by households, shops and other establishments within the boundaries of the gram panchayats.

CONCLUSION:

Apart from all the above, community preparation activity for waste management should focus on educating and equipping the community to take responsibility to manage the waste they generate at household level. Conscious reduction of the amount of waste one generates could greatly bring down the burden of finding ways to manage.

Waste generation is more a socio-psychological problem than a problem that technologies can solve. Our social and behaviour change communication strategies should aim at cultivating habits that favour waste prevention, waste segregation at household level. Such an approach can make us realise the dream of Swatchh Bharat in the near future.

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