**Rural Solid Waste: Constraints and Management Approaches**

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**Abstract**

Solid wastemanagement in rural areasis a big challenge and affectsthe public health, cleanliness and environmental perspective. Domestic waste generated in rural households of developing countries has become an issue of serious concern.It was estimated that half of the world's population resides in rural areas (World Bank, 2021), While much attention has been given to waste management in urban areas, the challenges faced by rural communities often go unnoticed. Solid waste generated in rural areas is predominantly organic and biodegradable. The organic fraction varies from country to country; it is usually above 50%, even reaching 90% in very isolated communities. The lower values i.e. around 40%, are due to factors such as the use of food as animal feed. Plastic and paper is usually the second and third representative of waste fraction, values of plasticranging from 4% to 20% while, paper waste represents around 10% in some cases. Key challenges in rural areas include low awareness and education levels among rural residents, inadequate waste management infrastructure, funds, unavailability of sustainable technology at household or community level, adequate operation and maintenance, resource constraints, unorganized waste streams, open dumping and burning practices, and a lack of regulatory enforcement. These challenges collectively contribute to environmental degradation, health risks, and the degradation of local ecosystems. To address these challenges, a multifaceted approach is required including raising awareness, developing essential waste management infrastructure, engaging the local community, promoting waste segregation and recycling, encouraging composting and biogas generation, exploring innovative technologies suitable for rural settings, enacting supportive government policies, and investing in capacity building.The implementation of these strategies will not only alleviate the waste management problems faced by rural areas but also lead to enhanced environmental health, economic opportunities, and improved living conditions. This chapter will provide a roadmap for sustainable waste management practices that contribute to the overall well-being of rural communities in developing countries.

**Introduction**

Solid waste management is a critical concern that transcends geographical boundaries and socioeconomic contexts, impacting both urban and rural areas. It can be defined as any waste other than human excreta, urine and wastewater. It can also be defined as the organic and inorganic waste materials produced by households, and commercial and industrial establishments for which owners have no economic value (Shah et. al., 2015). The World Bank reported a global MSW production of 2.01 billion tonnes in 2016, with a projected generation of 3.40 billion tonnes in 2050 (World Bank Group, [2018](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11356-020-07933-y#ref-CR45)).According to the 2011 census, 68.84% of the total population of India lives in a rural area, and total waste generated is about 0.3–0.4 million metric tons per day in the rural area (CRINIRDPR, 2016).Typically one to two-thirds of the generated solid waste are not collected (World Resources Foundation, 1996). As a result, the uncollected waste causes environmental pollution and endangers human lives. There are major gaps in waste collection coverage between larger cities and rural regions across developing and transition countries. A study estimates that 1.9 billion people lack waste collection services in rural areas and coverage rate of rural population is under 50% in 105 countries (Mihai, 2015).

Solid waste management (SWM) is a commonly used name and defined as the application of techniques to ensure an orderly execution of the various functions of collection, transport, processing, treatment and disposal of solid waste (Robinson, 1986). For efficient solid waste management(SWM) in rural areas of developing countries,the study of the sources of waste generation and its rate is very important for efficient solid waste management. The management of solid waste involves a series of activities aimed at minimizing waste generation, promoting efficient collection and transportation, implementing appropriate treatment and disposal methods, and fostering recycling and resource recovery.Rural communities, often characterized by dispersed populations, agricultural activities, and limited infrastructure. While the complexities of solid waste management have been extensively studied in urban environments, rural areas present a unique set of challenges that demand distinct considerations and solutions.

**Solid waste classification:**

In rural areas sources of waste may be agricultural wastes (e.g., straws, stalks, husks, wood, and sawdust) are often disposed byburning in open fields with exposure to fire hazard and causes air pollution (Grover&Chaudhry, 2019) as well as deplete the soilquality and microbial population (Grover & Chaudhry, 2023).Insteadagricultural waste can becollected and managed properly and can be used forconservation agriculture(Grover et al., 2015). Other type of waste generated ishousehold waste (biowaste, plastics,textiles, etc.) also prone to open burning practices. Mixed wastes may contain hazardous items (e-waste, batteries, oils, solvents, paints, contaminated wood, pesticide bottles, residues and pharmaceutical products) which are released into the atmosphere, soil, and groundwater (Chanderappa, 2012). Depending upon land holding and house type solid waste in rural areas generally includes paper, plastic, cloths, broken glass, metal, rubber, house sweeping, kitchen waste, garden waste, cattle dung and waste from cattle sheds, agro waste, waste from markets and shopping areas, hotels, etc. (Mohrana, 2012).

Broadly solid waste can be divided into two categories:-

**Biodegradable waste**

The waste which can be decomposed by biological processes, for example, vegetable peel, food, farm waste, and so on. Organic waste is biodegradable and can be recycled. The rural organic waste includes agricultural, domestic and rural industrial wastes. Agricultural waste is preliminary originated from animals (excreta and by products of dead animals) and plants (leaves, stalks, stubbles and shells) (Varshney, 1987). Most of this degradable waste is either thrown on dumping sites mostly on common lands and used as manure in farms after decomposition about a year or more (Yadav et al., 2015).

**Non-biodegradable**

Non-biodegradable waste cannot be broken down by biological processes, for example, paper, glass, metal, and so on.The waste can be further classified into two types: recyclable and non-recyclable – Recyclable waste is that waste which has economic value that can be recovered, for example, metal, paper, glass, plastic bottles, and so on – Non-recyclable waste is that waste which does not have economic value of recovery, for example, tetra packs, thermocol, and so on. Most of the women burnt polythenes either for igniting the fire in the hearth or even otherwise instead of disposing. The metal, glass and plastic waste were reported to be sold to the vendors (Yadav et al., 2015).

**Waste generation scenario in rural areas**

The waste composition has a significant impact on waste management practices. High-income groups utilize more packaged products, resulting in higher volumes of paper, glass, metals, plastics, and textiles as compare to low-income groups (Sridevi et al., 2012). MSW may also contain harmful wastes such as paints, used medicine, pesticides, E-wastes and batteries.Waste generation rate depends on factors such as population density, economic status, level of commercial activity, culture and city/region (Sunil et al., 2017).The per capita waste generation in rural areas of Low Middle Income Countries is comparatively lower than elsewhere (Sanabria et al, 2022). This is mainly due to lower income, resource consumption,attitude towards waste generation socio-economic statusand also lifestyle (Han et al., 2018, Patwa et al., 2020, Grover et al., 2023). People become more environmentally sustainable due to poverty and lack of materials; indeed, they give decisive importance to product reuse (Murad and Hasim, 2010 and Gutberlet, 2021). The communities have a more sustainable approach in rural areas than others. They are more in line with the circular economy and waste management hierarchy principles that conceive waste reduction and material reuse as essential (WHO, 2021). Figure-1 shows the waste generation rate per capita in rural communities of developing countries. It can be seen, the values vary substantially, in this case, from 0.18 to 0.57 kg/(inhabitant × day). However, depending on the above mentioned factors, it is possible to find values outside this range. These values were obtained as an average from the villages surveyed by the authors. Furthermore, local legislation like ban on plastic bags in some African countries has proven in effectively reduction of some waste flow (Behuria, 2021). Other factors like, use food waste as animal feed or green waste for cooking can contribute to reducing waste generation in rural communities (Viljoen et al., 2021).

**Fig-1** Waste generation rate per capita in rural communities of developing countries (Vinti and Voccari, 2022**)**

**Waste characterizationand composition in rural areas:**

Waste composition is influenced by a variety of elements, including dietary habits, cultural customs, climate, and socioeconomic status (Gupta et al., 2013: Shrivastva et al., 2014). Waste composition and characterization determine the waste management criteria.Characteristics and composition of solid waste generated in the rural area are different from waste generates in the urban area.Though, solid waste generated in rural areas is predominantly organic and biodegradable, it is becoming a major problem as the waste generated is not segregated in-situ (Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation), Government of India. Most of the generated solid waste in rural areas is organic, which makes composting a most suitable technology to convert waste into useful manure. Other recyclable material sold to the government authorized recycler and toxic waste to the nearby municipal corporation (Lima and Paulo, 2018; Kale and Attar, 2016). As per survey carried in a Devan village of Hisar district showed that the different type of waste generated from households or residential areas were mainly biodegradable(Yadav et al., 2015). The household waste also mainly comprises of biodegradable waste consisting of kitchen waste mixed with ash, paper, stationary and books, clothes, urine and animal dung, and reminder of fodder by animals and usually not considered hazardous by the villagers. The non-biodegradable waste items like leftover pesticides and their empty containers, paint, batteries and medicines perceived as hazardous waste by villagers. Quantum of waste generated was reported in the form of headload (metal or plastic container). For animal waste, the head load contained dung about 12-15 kg. On average, a family with 4-5 animals produced 2- 3 number of such head loads and another head load of 5-7 kg consisted of household and agro waste. The quantity of waste generated is increasing in rural areas as a result of increased population, consumerism and commercial activities.

**Table-1:** Type and quantum of waste at Household level (Yadav et al., 2015)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. No.**  | **Type**  | **Details** | **Quantum** |
| **Biodegradable waste** |
| 1. | Kitchen waste and ash | Leftover food, peels and ash | 1.0 kg/day |
| 2. | Paper | Cardboard, paper bags, newspaper, stationary and books | 3-5 kg/annum |
| 3. | Miscellaneous organic materials | Leaves, grass, remainder of agro- waste, clothes | Varied according to family size, land, herd size |
| 4. | Manure | Remainder of fodder by animals, urine and dung of animals | 5-7 kg/day |
| **Non-biodegradable waste** |
| 5. | Plastic | Broken mugs, buckets, bottles | 1-2 kg/ annum |
| 6. | Poly bags | Multi coloured poly bags | 0.5 kg/ annum |
| 7. | Glass and Bone- china | Tumbler, Glass bottles, crockery | 3-5 kg/annum |
| 8. | Metal | Tin, containers | 1-2 kg/ annum |
| 9. | Hazardous- waste | Batteries, paints, pesticides, insecticide, left over medicines | Varied according to landholding and means of transportation and type of house |

Waste composition is very important in identifying the main challenges as well as best waste management strategies. It can vary significantly depending on local conditions. . Table- 2 shows waste composition in rural communities of developing countries. Organic waste always represents the prevalent fraction.

**Table –2:**Waste Composition in rural communities of different countries(Vinti and Voccari, 2022).

|  |
| --- |
|  Waste Fraction [%] |
| **country**  | **Organic fraction** | **Plastic** | **Paper and Cardboard** | **Metals** | **Glass** | **Textile** | **Woods** | **Hazardous** | **Others** |
| Mexico | 42.55 | 14.95 | 9.50 | 2.60 | 3.75 | 7.40 | 0.40 | 0.45 | 18.60 |
| India | 74.00 | 4.00 | 7.00 | 1.00 | 0.40 | 2.00 | 6.00 | NA | 5.60 |
| Iran | 50.98 | 13.58 | 6.07 | 0.47 | 2.09 | 12.53 | 0.44 | NA | 13.84 |
| Togo | 38.00 | 11.00 | 7.00 | ≈1.00 | 1.00 | ≈1.00 | NA | <1.00 | 41.00 |
| Brazil | 90.00 | 5.00 | 1.00 | 3.00 | NA | NA | NA | 1.00 | NA |
| Thailand | 43.29 | 20.62 | 11.43 | 0.34 | 4.55 | 4.55 | 1.55 | 0.29 | 16.53 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

\*NA stands for Not Available information.

As shown in Table 2, the organic fractionvary in different country, it is usually above 50%, even reaching 90% in very isolated communities. The lower values i.e. around 40%, are due to factors such as the use of food as animal feed. Plastic and paper is usually the second and third representative of waste fraction,values of plastic ranging from 4% to 20% while, paper waste represent around 10% in some cases. Metals and glass also showssubstantial variation, between 0.34% and 6.32% for metals and between 0.40% and 4.42% for glass. The informal waste pickers or local markets may also influence the percentage of metals and glass waste due to potentially valuable recyclables. Among the other waste categories, hazardous waste is worth mentioning. Indeed, such a waste fraction (including e-waste) was identified by many studies in rural villages of developing countries. The rural areas were assumed to be free of toxic waste (Patwa et al., 2020). A study carried out to access the quantity and quality of household solid waste of rural communities in Konkan region showed that the average daily per capita of household waste generation was 0.0314 kg/cap-day. About 54.89% of the total engendered waste in the studied villages was organic and food waste, while paper, cardboard, plastics, metals/glass, textiles and ash/dirt constituted 9.28, 8.04, 16.4, 1.34, 8.62, and 1.41, respectively shown in table-3

**Table 3**: Average waste composition in different seasons in the 7 studied villages (Naware et al., 2022)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. No.** | **Component** | **Season** | **Avg (%)** |
| **Summer (%)** | **Rainy (%)** | **Winter (%)** |
| 1.  | Organic and food waste | 50.64±13.65 | 58.39±20.25 | 55.65±14.35 | 54.89 |
| 2.  | Paper | 10.96±2.05 | 11.24±2.89 | 5.65 | 9.28 |
| 3.  | Cardboard | 8.45±1.52 | 6.91±1.50 | 8.78 | 8.05 |
| 4 | Plastics | 13.58±2.00 | 14.32±4.51 | 21.3±5.85 | 16.40 |
| 5.  | Metals/glass | 1.85±0.50 | 0.25 | 1.92 | 1.34 |
| 6.  | Textiles | 11.68±2.02 | 7.63 | 6.55±2.50 | 8.62 |
| 7 | Ash/dirt | 2.84±0.65 | 1.26 | 0.15 | 1.42 |

Currently, Asia generates one-third of total waste, with significant contributions from China (0–0.49) kg/capita/day and India (0.50–0.9) kg/capita/day (Kaza et al., 2018; Modak, 2011). World Bank has also indicated the current scenario along with future projection comparing with different regions of the world. This indicates the average per capita/day waste generation in 2016, ranging from (0.09–0.60)kg for lower-income region, (0.16–0.79) kg for lower-middle income group and (0.1–1.2)kg for Upper-middle income group respectivey (“Waste Generation\_world Bank Org.,”, 2015).Figure-2 shows the composition of waste in typical Indian cities compared to developed countries.



 Composition of Indian waste Composition of Developed countries waste

**Fig-2** Showing comparison of composition of Indian waste with Developed countries (Ahluwali and Patel 2018, Kaja and Yao, 2018)

**Key solid waste management legislation in India**

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified the new Solid Waste Management Rules (SWM), 2016.The new rules are now applicable beyond municipal areas and have included every urban local body (Mega city to Panchayat level), outgrowths in urban agglomerations, census towns, notified industrial townships, areas under the control of Indian Railways, airports, special economic zones, places of pilgrimage, religious and historical importance, and State and Central Government organizations in their ambit. The new rules have mandated the source segregation of waste in order to channelize the waste to wealth by recovery, reuse and recycle. Waste generators would now have to now segregate waste into three streams- Biodegradables, Dry (Plastic, Paper, metal, Wood, etc.) and Domestic Hazardous waste (diapers, napkins, mosquito repellents, cleaning agents etc.) before handing it over to the collector.

As per the new rules, it has been advised that the bio-degradable waste should be processed, treated and disposed of through composting or bio-methanation within the premises as far as possible and the residual waste shall be given to the waste collectors or agency as directed by the local authority. Waste processing facilities will have to be set up by all local bodies having a population of 1 million or more within two years. For census towns with a population below 1 million or for all local bodies having a population of 0.5 million or more, common, or stand-alone sanitary landfills will have to be set up in three years time. Also, common, or regional sanitary landfills to be set up by all local bodies and census towns with a population under 0.5 million will have to be completed in three years. Also, the rules have mandated bio‐remediation or capping of old and abandoned dump sites within five years (DTE, 2016).

**Need of solid waste Management in rural areas**

Solid waste represents a growing challenge at the global level, poses risks to the environment and human health , when not adequately managed(Vinti et al., 2021). It is a global challenge, especially in economically developing countries due to their growing populations, life style changes, rising community living standards, and increasing waste generation (Hassan et al., 2016). Poorly managed domestic waste including the lack of sanitation services and inadequate waste management facilities in developing countries has resulted in serious environmental pollution, landscape damage and has even had a negative influence on local people’s health (Apostol and Mihai, 2012; Balasubramanian and Birundha, 2011).Moreover, people living in rural areas often faces additional challenges in solid waste management.

Now the modern products like plastic and e-waste can be found in rural areas (Salhofer et al., 2021). Unfortunately, people in rural areas often lack the proper awareness and tools to manage solid waste appropriately which turn to dangerous practices as waste dumping and open burning (Cook et al., 2020, Gomez-Sanabria et al, 2022). Although in many cases some rural communities have been trying to make resources from waste, recover precious flows and increase their revenues, by using polluting practices (Salhofer et al., 2021). The uncollected fraction accounts about 80% of waste burning in rural areas (Gomez-Sanabria et al, 2022). In addition, it was also reported that livestock feeding and waste recycling can be illegally carried out in dumpsites (Taghipour et al., 2016). All such practices causes significant environmental and health risks, such as soil, air and water contamination, bioaccumulation of contaminants through the food chain and infectious diseases (Krystsik et al., 2020). In some circumstances, informal waste pickers are involved in collecting precious waste flows, i.e., recyclables usually do not use personal protective equipment and are unaware of the risks of such an informal job (Gutberlet and Udddin, 2017).

**Principles and Methods of solid waste management suitable for rural areas**

Solid waste management in rural areas is perhaps the most neglected aspect of environmental sanitation. However, it is comparatively much easier to maintain solid wastes in rural areas than in urban areas. A number of waste prevention techniques are available, and they are commonly summarized as popularly known as 4Rs:reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery. Principles that can be followed during planning and implementation of biodegradable waste management should be need based and preferences of rural population. These should be technologically easy to use and low operation and maintenance cost.



 **Figure - 3**Principles for solid waste management: (Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Phase II Operational Guidelines, 2020.

Management of solid waste which generally involves proper segregation and scientific recycling of all the components is in fact the ideal way of dealing with solid waste.

**Basic principles of Solid Waste Management**

4Rs: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse & Recycle

* Refuse: Do not buy anything which we do not really need.
* Reduce - Reduce the amount of garbage generated. Alter our lifestyle so that minimum garbage is generated.
* Reuse - Reuse everything to its maximum after properly cleaning it. Make secondary use of different articles.
* Recycle – Keep things which can be recycled to be given to rag pickers or waste pickers (Kabadiwallahs).Convert the recyclable garbage into manures or other useful products.

Segregation at source: Store organic or biodegradable and inorganic or non biodegradable solid waste in different bins. Recycle of all the components with minimum labor and cost.

Different treatments for different types of solid wastes: One must apply the techniques which are suitable to the given type of garbage. For example the technique suitable for general market waste may not be suitable for slaughter house waste.

Treatment at nearest possible point: The solid waste should be treated in as decentralized manner as possible. The garbage generated should be treated preferably at the site of generation i.e. every house. Based on the above principles, an ideal Solid Waste Management for a village could be as under.



 **Figure 4-** An ideal Solid Waste Management at a glance

Source- Shrikant M.Navrekar, 2008, “Sustainable Solid waste Management: Need of the hour

In rural areas most of the household generate mainly organic wastes, with little quantity of inorganic wastes and it is completely free from toxic wastes. The non-biodegradable waste like paper, cloth, metal and glass can be recycled and plastics, if collected, segregated and shredded as per norms can be used in road construction. Due to organic nature of most of the wastes, the composting is the most suitable, sustainable and environment friendly method of recycling and reuse of solid wastes in rural areas. Composting of household wastes in rural areas is an age old practice. Composting is a process recycles organic waste products through the activity of naturally available soil microorganisms and produces compost. Initial mechanical breakdown of organic material in small particle completes by earthworms, and soil insects such as sow bugs, springtails, ants, mites, beetles. After the physical breakdown, microorganism activity starts and organic material decomposes in the form of manure (Cooperband, 2002). There are various types of the composting method suitable for rural areas as vermi-composting, windrow composting, aerobic composting (named Indore method) and anaerobic composting (named Bangalore method), and anaerobic bio-digester (biogas plant) as suggested by SBMG (2015). Various factors which affect the process and design of composting may useful for selection of composting technology. Factors which may affect composting are moisture content, aeration, turning frequency, temperature, C/N ratio and particle size of compost material.

**Table-3** Composting Methods (Guidelines on Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) in Rural Areas, Government of India, MDWS, 2014 and ADB, 2014)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Technology** | **Description** | **Advantages** | **Disadvantages** | **Conditions for use** |
| NADEP method | Composting takes place in a rectangular brick tank with aeration holes. Organic material is added in layers and compost is ready in almost 3 months | Composting can be done on a larger scale than using piles. All nutrients are retained in the tank so resulting compost is more nutrient rich. | Tanks work in 3 month rotations so at least 2 are needed which increases the cost. Large quantities of soil and water are needed which can be difficult to transport in some areas. The entire tank should be filled within a maximum 48 hour period (24hrs is better). | Tanks can be built in all conditions. The thatch roof protects the tank from moisture. Tank should be monitored to check for cracking of seal which would allow moisture to escape. Tanks require space and a lot of initial material so a community approach is better, using a communal space for the tank and agreeing the date for bringing material/ filling the tank. |
| Bangalore method  | Waste is composted anaerobically in a pit. Compost is ready in 6 - 8 months | Can accept municipal waste and night soil. Good for dry areas and no operation & maintenance is needed | Cannot be used in wet areas as the pit may become waterlogged. Gases produced can smell and the pit requires quite a large space. Composting process is slow | Useful in areas where the use of piles is limited by severe weather conditions e.g. strong winds and sun. Can be done at the household level where space permits as no O&M is required. Very cheap compared to tank methods as no infrastructure is required |
| Indore method | Waste is cut into small pieces and spread 10 - 15cm thick above ground or in a pit. Compost is ready in 4 months | No infrastructure is needed and process is relatively quick | Nutrients are lost to the soil. Regular turning is needed (every 5 days). Cannot be used in wet areas or areas with heavy rainfall due to waterlogging | Pit/heap is unprotected so may need some protection from animals/children etc. A windbreaker can be used to reduce effects of drying out. Very cheap compared to tank methods as no infrastructure is required. |
| Vermi-composting | Composting using a specific species of worms to break down waste Compost is ready in 3 - 4 months but compost must be removed in stages as the worms process it | More efficient than normal composting and produces richer compost. | Needs a vermitank or verminbed and worms need to be bought or grown which increases cost. Needs more operation & maintenance than normal | Worms’ optimal temperature range is 15 - 35 degrees Celsius. Lower temperatures hamper reproduction and higher temperatures kill the worms or make them leave.  Worms are very sensitive to drought so use in very dry areas is not recommended unless a reliable water source is available. |
| Bio gas from organic solid waste | Bio gas is created by the decomposition of organic waste in anaerobic conditions. The resulting gas can be let off into the atmosphere or it can be tapped for burning as a fuel. As well as the biogas, the process also produces a slurry which can be used as a nutrient rich fertilizer. |  | Gas accumulation rates are slower than rates of use but for areas reliant on wood as a fuel for cooking biogas provides an excellent alternative. | The biogas plant can be linked to the family or community toilet or it can be a standalone system to which wastes are added. There are many different designs available. The choice of design will be influenced primarily by the desired capacity, the space available to install the plant, the type of feed material (cattle dung has higher gas producing capacities than human waste) and the finances available for construction. Waste should be added daily to ensure continuous gas production. Stoves, cookers or lamps must be converted to accept biogas but the gas itself burns without odour |

It constituted/continued under SBM (G) for specific periods to approve or revise the Perspective Plan called the Project Implementation Plan (PIP) for the States/districts, and the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) as and when received the State/UT Governments duly approved by the State Level Scheme Sanctioning Committee (SLSCC) and finalized by the Appraisal Committee.

National Scheme sanctioning Committee

Each State has a State Water and Sanitation Mission to ensure that it has representation of state departments dealing with Rural Sanitation, Rural Drinking Water Supply, School Education, Health, Women and Child Development, Water Resources, Agriculture, Publicity etc.

State water and Sanitation committee

District water and sanitation committee should plan and advice on implementation of district Solid waste management plan with appropriate IEC strategies and convergence mechanism with all line department

District water and Sanitation committee

Block water and Sanitation committee is to provide guidance, support and monitor implementation of block Solid waste management plan in Rural Local bodies.

Block water and Sanitation committee

Village water and Sanitation committee is to provide support in terms of motivation, preparation of village action plan, mobilization, implementation and supervision of the programme

Village Water and sanitation committee

 Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) PhaseII Operational Guidelines, 2020

**Figure-5** Institutional framework and its role in Solid Waste Management in rural area

**Issues and challenges in solid waste management in rural areas**

The lack of governmental policy and finance, and long-term planning in waste management, associated with resistance to behavior change i.e. separation of wastes at source and poor waste management infrastructure, are the factors contribute to the existence of open dumps nowadays (Taherzadeh and Rajendran , 2015). The wild dumps are encountered in the peri-urban and rural areas due to the lack of waste and sanitation facilities. Frequently, such uncontrolled disposal sites are located in the proximity of households and water bodies. The dumps are a source of complex pollution (air, water, soil, and biodiversity) which threatens the public health. Mixed waste fractions (municipal, agricultural, construction and demolition, Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipments, bulk items), including hazardous streams, are disposed in such sites causing serious public health issues.

**Segregation of solid waste**

Waste segregation at the source, especially organic and recyclable portions have great environmental and economic advantages (Taghipour et al., 2016). A study of villages in Konkan region of India’s villages shows that the villages lacks an organized, methodological and efficient source separation program has for solid wastes (including food waste, plastics, paper and board, metal, and glass) at the studied villages (Naware et al., 2022). Generally, the people do not have enough cognizance about undesirable environmental and health risks of solid waste disposal at the studied villages. A similar study carried out on Comparison of Rural Solid Waste Management in Two Central Provinces of Iran also shows that waste separation was not implemented in villages and agricultural, medical and domestic wastes were collected in one place. The result of average calculation showed that only 4 percent of the wastes were separated by workers in the two provinces and the other 96 percent were left untouched(Hossein et al., 2017). Rural local bodies lacks appropriate number of sanitary workers in rural areas for door to door collection of waste (Kumar and Sharma, 2017). Agricultural wastes (e.g., straws, stalks, husks, wood, and sawdust) are often disposed by burning in open fields with exposure to fire hazard. Household waste (bio-waste, plastics, textiles, etc.) are also prone to open burning practices. Mixed wastes may contain hazardous items (e-waste, batteries, oils, solvents, paints, contaminated wood, and pharmaceutical products) which are released into the atmosphere, soil, and groundwater. The common hazardous substance used in the rural area includes insecticide, pesticide, fungicide, herbicide, chemical fertilizers, chemicals used for fumigation, cleaning agents used in animal husbandry, and medical waste. Such hazardous fraction must be separated, collected, and managed from common household waste (Chandrappa and Das, 2012). It was observed and reported during discussion with elected representative of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Haryana (India) that most of the time solid waste was handover to sanitary worker in an un-segregated form and only animal dung is separated. Also in majority of cases households retains plastic bottles, metals containers and other saleable item for the vendors. Improper segregation at source level requires additional manpower to segregate and needs more time. (Kumar and Sharma, 2019) .

**Open dumping of waste**

In rural areas, there is often a lack of awareness about proper waste management practices. Residents may not understand the environmental and health hazards associated with improper disposal methods, leading to open dumping or burning of waste. Constraints associated with bad road connections to urban areas make waste collection and management exceptionally challenging in rural areas. In many cases, big waste trucks can encounter difficulties travelling for long stretches of unpaved roads, and communities or isolated households (Vinti, 2021). while in urban areas of low- and lower-middle-income countries, estimated a waste collection rate of 48% and 71%, respectively, the same authors estimated that in rural areas, the waste collection was much lower, i.e., 26% and 33%, respectively (Kaza et. al., 2018). As a consequence, typical waste management practices at the community level consist of uncontrolled burning of waste, waste dumping, waste burying and reuse of unsorted waste as fertilizer (Ferronato et al., 2019, Cook and Velis, 2020). Infrastructures for management of rural solid waste which include collection, transport, treatment and disposal facilities like trash cans, vehicles, transfer stations, etc. is not enough in rural areas of china. Poor infrastructures significantly contributed the fact of irresponsible dumping of waste. As a result, the phenomenon of garbage besieging in villages is often reported (Chao et al., 2015).

**Lack of funds andinfrastructure**

The rural households may have no access to basic utilities (improved drinking water source, sanitation, waste management services), and pollute nearby water bodies by waste dumping and open defecation. In developing countries, especially in rural areas of Africa, India, and China, human waste disposal is a major concern besides household and agricultural waste (Epstein, 2015).Rural areas typically lack proper waste collection, segregation, and disposal infrastructure. Limited access to collection vehicles, waste treatment plants, and recycling facilities makes it difficult to manage waste effectively less amount of wages are paid to Sanitary workers deployed for solid waste management in villages. It was reported by elected members of various Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) that many of rural local bodies do not have any source of income (village fund) except grant from center and state government. Further many Gram Panchayats has no land availability or the land has been encroached by villagers thereby the shed cannot be constructed. These are alsothe factors responsible for lacking of solid waste processing facilities in rural areas (Kumar and Sharma 2017).Alternate use of SWM sheds and encroachment in the sheds are also hurdle in solid waste management in rural areas.

**Lack of proper planning during project preparation**

solid waste management services are provided by Municipal Corporations/Municipalities/Rural Local bodies lacks proper planning such as properly designed community waste collection bins as per requirements of quantity solid waste, neither they are nor they are placed at proper places, lack of training to handle the waste by sanitary workers and Lack of coordination among various departments of civic bodies also lead to poor management of solid waste management (Vij, 2012)Preparation of solid waste management project requires detail survey, focus group discussion and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise but many rural local bodies start the project without proper planning and survey. The project can never be successful without proper estimation of solid waste generation, manpower requirement, and vehicles needed for transportation. PRA exercise must be exercised seriously for people participation and to know their willingness to pay for the services provided (Kumar et. al. 2018). The site selections for shed were also found inappropriate in many villages. Either the sheds were constructed at distant location from the residential areas or very close vicinity to village ponds, which inundated during rainy season (Kumar and Sharma 2017).A study on quantification and characterization of rural solid waste in Konkan region also reveal that collection transportation and disposal of villages waste was not taken seriously and disposing it at open dumping sites (Naware et al., 2022). Lack of priority by Gram Panchayats for rural sanitation though many Gram Panchayats are not taking it seriously. They are still interested in traditional practice of construction of streets and drains. There is a need to change the mindset of elected representative of PRI’s to focus on this issue.

**Sale of compost and recyclable**

After door to door collection the waste is transported to shed where segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste is carried out. The biodegradable fraction was converted into compost or vermi-compost whereas non-biodegradable is stored for sale to the local vendor. The non-biodegradable dry waste i.e. polythene, rubber, plastic PVC, paper, glass etc. has very low economic value and therefore not purchased by any local purchaser and remained as storage in the shed for long period. Further, in many Gram Panchayat the compost has no local buyer and hence no income generation which also affects the sustainability of the project (Kumar et al., 2019).

**Reluctant behaviour of households to pay service fees and insanitary behaviour**

Large fraction of people in rural areas are reluctant to pay service fees if rural local bodies makes any arrangement of door to door collection and transportation of waste. Insanitary behavior of people is also big hurdle as households dispose un-segregated waste many times and generally kept all their waste to polythene bags and a tie up a knot before disposal. Segregation of waste into dry and wet is prerequisite in SWM. It requires lot of time in with additional manpower and expenditure in segregation of solid wastes after collection. A study of 21 villages located in province of Bushehr, southern area of Iran and north of Persian Gulfalso shows that In 78.6 percent of chosen villages, the villagers pay for the collection, and disposal of waste while in 21.4 percent of villages, the villagers don’t pay any direct expenses (Abduli et al., 2008).

**Lack of technical skill**

Solid waste management require technical skills. It was found that the sanitary workers lack technically skill (Kumar and Sharma, 2019). The dry waste collected from households composed of variety of mixed electronic and hazardous waste and must be stored separately, but it is was kept in mixed form in dry pits. For vermi-composting, organic wastes and animal dung, moisture and earthworm are required in proportionate manner and needs turning after regular interval of time. As reported the lack of scientific skills causes death of earthworms and thus compost so produced is also of inferior quality. Recycling of only some types of materials like plastics, paper and metals is not enough. Many types of new materials mainly used for packaging are not, or indeed cannot be, recycled in the low-end technology being employed. Technical training at all levels (General public to state) forms the backbone of a successful waste management programme. Adequate training must be given to all those concerned prior to actual launching of the programme in the field (Agarwal et al., 2015)

**Possible Solutions and way forward:**

**Grass root level planning**

To make Solid Waste Management a success in true sense, the planning as well as implementation should start from general public level planning followed by block level planning, district level planning and state level planning (Agarwal et al., 2015). Whenever any plan is passed by civic authorities/ rural local bodies for any new residential colony/apartments/flats, or market areas it must check that there should be proper provision of waste disposal and treatment in it so that its waste should be treated at its source level itself and it should not scatter here and there and money spent by civic bodies on its collection, transportation and treatment can be reduced (Vij, 2012).Appropriate number of sanitary worker should be deployed based upon number of HHs. 01 sanitary worker @150-200 HHs should be kept (Kumar and Sharma, 2019). The age of sanitary worker should not be more than 58 years. The sanitary workers should be paid equal wages as per Govt. instructions. The Gram Panchayats should prepare a work schedule/ area allocation to each sanitary worker with clear instruction of work i.e. door to door collection, street sweeping, drains cleaning etc. so that all habitation should be covered. Rural local bodies should pass a resolution to restrict the people using public as well as private land for dump sites. Individual/ community Compost pits should be constructed to remove the dump sites. The funds under SBM-G/ MGNREGA should be utilized for this purpose. Sanitary supervisor-cum-Motivator should be engaged at a cluster level for monitoring, motivation and collection of user charges with the help of sanitary workers.

SWM shed should be not be constructed in waterlogged areas. Local bodies lacking availability of land, either sheds should be constructed in sharing with nearby villages or people should be motivated for home composting. SWM shed must have water facilities for composting/ vermin-composting. Repair and maintenance of SWM sheds should be done if required. Funds under MGNREGA can be used for the purpose. The recurring expenditure includes remuneration of workers, operation and maintenance cost while the income includes service fees, sale of recyclables and compost, fine and penalties etc (Kumar and Sharma, 2019).

**Awareness generation**

No waste management programme can be successful without the help of the people because ultimately they are the producers of waste. Proper help should be taken from the effective people of the society like Gram Pradhan, RWAs, NGOs etc. to sensitize and educate the people regarding waste management (Vij, 2012). Organizing training and capacity-building programs for local authorities, waste management workers, and community members. Encouraging recycling and composting can significantly reduce the amount of waste that needs to be disposed of. Local initiatives, such as promoting the use of biodegradable products and supporting community composting, can be effective. Intensive IEC activities should done to aware/motivate people especially women to promote HHs level segregation of waste. Elected PRIs , SHGs members, Asha Workers, anganwari workers should be utilized for IEC/BCC for SWM. Notification of SWM rules/Bye laws should be done at prominent location in the village for community awareness. Separate meeting with community Based Organization e.g. Mandir committee, Gurudwara Prabandhak committee, Ramlila Committee, market union etc. should be done to restrict the use of single use plastic during bhandara or any other religious/cultural events.

**Waste prevention and rural sustainability approach**

The rural waste management must rely on a systemic approach involving technical, financial, social, cultural, environmental, and governance aspects. Developing and transition countries must promote smart traditional ways to recycle, reuse, and compost/digest the municipal and agricultural wastes from remote rural regions in order to increase the waste diversion rate from uncontrolled waste disposal practices (open burning, wild dumps, and river/marine dumping). Generally, rural areas of high-income countries (HIC) are full covered by waste management services in contrast with upper-middle-income countries (UMIC) where the rural population is partially served or low-income countries (LIC) where such services are poor or nonexistent. There are two main routes which can help worldwide rural communities to achieve a sustainable waste management system as shown in Figure-2. Both routes can be applied at regional level taking into account the specific geographical conditions (natural and socioeconomic) which may vary at different scales (village, municipality, county, region, and country).



**Figure-6** Routes toward waste prevention and rural sustainability (Mihai et al., 2017)

**Biogas plants**

Home composting and biogas production via home or community digesters are suitable alternatives for rural communities across developing and transition countries where the share of bio-waste in the total solid waste fraction is significant and agriculture plays a key role in their economy.The four cornerstone technologies for agricultural waste and organic fraction of municipal solid waste (OFMSW) suitable for rural communities are animal fodder, briquetting, anaerobic digestion (biogas), and composting with other recycling techniques for solid wastes (El-Haggar, 2007). Such facilities may serve rural communities without access to formal waste management systems specific to urban areas. These technologies may be integrated into one rural waste complex in order to achieve a desirable zero waste and pollution target. Small anaerobic digesters which use agricultural and food waste may be operational at household level in order to obtain energy (biogas) for cooking and other basic needs. Biogas technology is a proven and established technology in many parts of the world such as Germany, the UK, Switzerland, France, Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Republic of Korea, Finland, Republic of Ireland, Brazil, China, and India (Akinbomi et al., 2014). Thus, in China there are more than 30 million household digesters, India there are 3.8 million, followed by Vietnam with more than 0.5, and Nepal 0.2 million and Bangladesh with 60,000 digesters, while farm-scale digesters are expanding in Europe, the USA, and Canada (Kabir et al., 2016).

**Installation of suitable mechanism for preventing entry of solid waste to water bodies**

Suitable mechanism such as mess/grill must be installed in drains to prevent the entry of debris into the water bodies or covered drains should be constructed with silt chamber at each outlet of the HHs to prevent the entry of debris into the drains. If the entry of plastic/ non biodegradable waste is not restricted to enter in village ponds/water bodies, it will not create a heap of legacy waste in coming years but also affect the ponds ecosystem and aquatic biodiversity.

 **Incineration, Pulverization and land filling**

 Incineration has been practice since 1980 and its is an extremely effective bulk wasted reduction technology, typically reducing waste volume by 90% and mass by around 70% (Ogundele, 2005). Incineration is an excellent method of refuse disposal from the sanitary. Stand point rubbish and garbage are burnt together. Refuse is reduced to ash by burning at high temperate usually between 45°c to 1100°c(APWA, 1970). The high temperature is needed to kill the odour and solids remaining after incineration are used to fill land. There are two categories of incineration, central and on-site incineration. Central incineration serve municipality while on-site incineration are used in hospitals, stores, houses, etc.

Pulverization is a treatment process meant to reduce waste volume. It is a method by which heterogeneous waste can be made homogenous through shredding is a quick and relatively simple treatment that a dense homogenous and less offensive waste. There are two broad types of pulverization the hammer mill and Rotary. The hammer mill is found that power consumption increases sharply with the decrease in the particle size of the product while rotary pulverization is done inside the rotary drum by attrition and abrasion.

 Land Filling is an improvement on open dumping. It involves the use of an existing pit such as quarry or open mining in some cases a pit of about 12mitres deep could be used. Refuse are then dumped into it by Spreading and compacting of layer up to 12 miters thick. By this fly and other pests are eliminated

**Conclusions**

The rural areas have tremendous wealth in terms of underutilized animal excretion, domestic refuses and crop residues. A systematic management and utilization approach with recent innovation will not only help in maintaining rural areas clean but will also provide sufficient energy, manure and raw material for different users. The sustainable waste management technologies will bring about a positive change in sanitation and hygiene behavior in rural people. The governments dealing with rural local bodies should focus on special awareness drive and training on solid and liquid waste management for elected members of village council with special emphasis on sustainable technologies with strong scientific consideration.

It is also recommended that the rural local bodies should place the system of door to door collection of household waste in segregated form and this waste should be utilized for composting /vermin-composting at a reasonable distance from the residential areas. These bodies should pass a resolution to restrict the people using public as well as private land for dump sites. Individual/ community Compost pits should be constructed to remove the dump sites. The funds under different schemes like SBM-G/MGNREGS and other state and center finance commission should converged for this purpose. Intensive IEC activities should done to aware/motivate people especially women to promote HHs level segregation of waste. Elected PRIs, community based organization, Asha Workers, anganwari workers can play a vital role for awareness generation and behavior change campaigning for solid waste management. Notification of SWM rules/Bye laws should be done at prominent location in the village for community awareness.

Solid waste management in rural areas presents unique challenges that require tailored solutions. By raising awareness, building infrastructure, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering collaboration, it is possible to address these challenges and create a cleaner, healthier environment for rural communities. As we move forward, a combination of community participation, technology, and policy support will be key to achieving effective solid waste management in rural areas.

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