

CHINTAN Fact Sheet



Waste Tales

Giant Annual Droppings

From a culture of being frugal, Indians are wasting huge amounts. Every year, 42 million tons of waste is generated, which is the same as the amount of wheat Australia produces annually. By 2050, projections are India will generate 150 million tons. The world discards 2 billion tons of trash daily. More land is being used to dump trash than ever before.

Who Wastes the Most?

Delhi is the largest producer of MSW in India, generating 8000 metric tons per day. By 2020 this number will increase to 23,000 tons. However, in India, 72% of the total waste is generated by the Class I cities. This means 7 mega cities, with more than 4 million residents and 28 metro cities, with more than 1 million residents.

71:1 - The Ratio of Waste Generation to Discards

Every ton of discarded products and materials typically generates about 71 tons of manufacturing, mining, oil and gas exploration, agricultural, coal combustion, and other discards.

India's Waste Sector - Twice More Greenhouse Gases than Other Asian Countries

The waste sector - which includes solid waste disposal, biological treatment of solid waste, incineration and open burning of waste, and wastewater treatment and discharge - is responsible for roughly 124 million TCO₂e of emissions or 6.7% of total Indian emissions. This is nearly double the Asia average, implying we need to improve how we handle waste in India.

You Produce .8 kg of Waste per Day

On a per capita basis, individual middle-class residents in Delhi and other big cities generate nearly .8 kg of waste per person per day.⁵ Multiply that by 71, and calculate how much waste you really produce.

And Also, We Waste More

In 1996, Indian waste comprised 0.60% plastics. In 2005, this shot up to 9.22%. Chintan's waste audits for the Delhi region show it is now 10.16%. It's the same story

with paper. From 3.63% in 1996, it now comprises 8.13% of the total trash. Indians are consuming more and wasting more!

More Trash Means More Land

According to a thumb rule, we need 8-10 acres of land to handle the waste of 100,000 people, for up to 25 years. For a billion Indians, we need 80,000 to 1,00,000 acres of land.



Waste Costs

India's 4378 municipalities spend a lot of money handling waste. Between 10 to 50% of the municipal budget is allocated for solid waste management (SWM). Of this, in a mid-size town, up to 70% of the funds are spent on collection, 20% on transportation and only 5% on disposal. Not only this, but between 30-50% of the total staff are typically engaged in SWM.

Waste-to-Energy (WtE) - No Solution

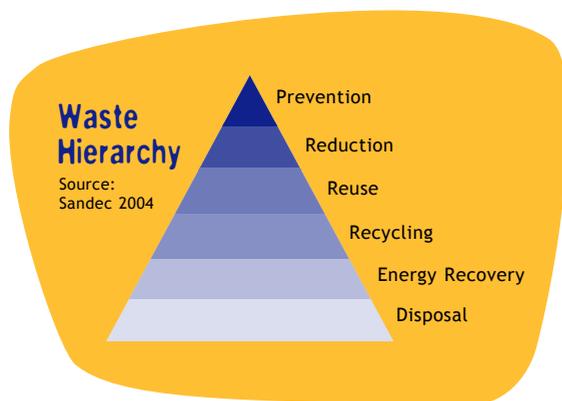
Indian waste has a low calorific value-between 700 and a 1000 kilocalories, which is unsuitable for thermal technologies like incineration, pyrolysis and waste-to-energy. Incinerators have been shown to emit more CO₂ per megawatt-hour than coal-fired or natural-gas-fired plants. Apart from this, they emit toxins such as dioxins and furans, which India has globally pledged to phase out, and which cannot be measured in India in any case.

Recycle it!

Of this waste, 15-20% can be recycled. Mostly thanks to your kabari and wastepicker! And 40-50% of the waste can be composted, but less than 3% is composted today. That would leave us with only 30% of the waste to worry about. Right now, we worry about 80% of it, all that the wastepicker leaves behind.

Don't be Like China

In 2004, China became the world's top waste producer. The United States of America was toppled from its No. 1 position. China now has to spend 8 times more on waste disposal by 2020 and require 1400 new landfills.



How can you be part of the solution?

Here are a dozen ideas. Add your own to them and let us know.

Be brave. Don't let peer pressure force you to buy more things than you want to.

Use less things, so you waste less things. There is no humiliation in having less things than your friends. Be smart about it-buy only what you really like and need.

Make the effort to find people in your neighbourhood who will repair your appliances, shoes, bags etc. Who is the local mocha? Who can repair a microwave?



If you are part of an office, work with the administration to send out information on people near the office who repair goods, so everyone has the option of being greener.

Empty jars don't just belong in a grandmother's kitchen. You should use them too, along with plastic containers from take-out food. Infact, use them before you buy new, empty jars from a shop.

Stop wrapping your food in aluminum foil-it is an energy intensive metal with a high carbon footprint. Using and tossing it away is sheer wastage of the metal, of energy, oil for transportation-it all just disrespects the planet!

Food waste adds to greenhouse gases as it rots in landfills. Start composting at home, and give off old bread and rotis to stray animals.

Don't wrap gifts. If you must, put them in gift bags that can be reused later.

No one needs sachets for home or office use. Do not buy sachets of ketchup, coffee or shampoo, even for children's parties-use bottles instead.

Think about water – do you have to use disposable glasses for water when you have a large number of guests or near the office water cooler? And even if you have reusable glasses, buy smaller sizes to waste less water that people leave.

Train yourself to use computers better, so you can work on a document without printing it out. In an office, email everyone against print-outs and if you can, ensure only a fixed amount of blank paper is given out each month.

Always involve your local wastepicker and kabaris to take away the waste you produce. If you can, give it to them for free. They are India's biggest environmentalists—offer them your support.



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