

Srinagar's garbage composting project yet to take off

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Signifying messy state of affairs, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has failed to use infrastructure for composting garbage which is generated in the summer capital.

The composting pits were constructed at Achan, Nishat and at few other places. Huge amounts were spent on these projects, with an aim to compost the organic garbage scientifically to minimize its ill-effects on environment. However, SMC is still stuck to old tradition of dumping garbage by refilling landfills.

Under the Solid Waste Management Rules (SWMR) 2000, which were revised in 2016, the composting of garbage has been made mandatory. Experts said the SMC authorities have failed to use available composting pits at Achan and other places, the much needed process which is largely used in other states and cities.

"Designing successful composting systems requires an understanding of certain biological, chemical, and physical processes such as the movement of air, uptake of carbon and nitrogen, and heat production and transfer," said an expert.

He added that the composting of garbage at Achan was not carried as officials have least knowledge about its advantages. "There must be seriousness. What otherwise is fun of spending huge amounts for these projects when authorities fail to utilize them for public interest," he said.

"A major issue facing modern society is waste management. What should we do with the waste we produce? A growing emphasis has been placed on the three R's... Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle," he said.

He added that composting provides a means of accomplishing all these parameters. "Through composting the amount of garbage sent to the landfill is reduced, the organic matter is reused rather than dumped, and it is recycled into a useful soil amendment," he informed.

“Natural ecosystems have a proven method of breaking down organic materials into a useful end-product: the decomposers found within the food chain break down nature's organic waste and turn it into humus, the organic component of soil,” another expert said.

“Composting is a way of harnessing the natural process of decomposition to speed up the decay of waste. The history of composting dates back to the history of early agriculture. Many find that composting is as much of an art as a science,” he informed.

“Recent concern about managing wastes and producing food in an environmentally sound manner has led to a renewed interest in small-scale, backyard composting as well as an interest in developing large-scale, commercial and municipal composting systems,” he said.

The SMC Commissioner, Dr Shafqat Khan said that composting is in pipeline. “The composting pits at Achan are used. However, its capacity is not so much. We are going to have bio-mechanization plant. Shortly, we are going to execute our plans to reduce, reuse and recycle garbage,” he said.

He said that SMC is also going to invite tenders for Refused-Derived-Fuel (RDF) and a memorandum has been signed with J&K Cements Limited in this regard which would procure it.