

# HALF OF WASTE-TO-ENERGY PLANTS IN INDIA DEFUNCT

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It also proposes setting up a Waste-to-Energy Corporation of India, which would construct incineration plants through PPP models. Currently, there are 40-odd WTE plants at various stages of construction.

“The fundamental reason (for the inefficiency of these plants) is the quality and composition of waste. MSW (municipal solid waste) in India has low calorific value and high moisture content. As most wastes sent to the WTE plants are unsegregated, they also have high inert content. These wastes are just not suitable for burning in these plants. To burn them, additional fuel is required which makes these plants expensive to run,” said Swati Singh Sambyal, author of the report and researcher on waste management, at the CSE.

About 1.43 lakh tonnes per day (TPD) of municipal solid waste (MSW) is generated across the country. Of this, 1.11 lakh TPD (77.6%) is collected and 35,602 TPD (24.8%) processed.

In addition, India generates close to 25,940 TPD of plastic waste of which 15,342 remains uncollected, according to the Central Pollution Control Board.

As per the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, MSW generation will reach 4.5 lakh TPD by 2031 and 11.9 lakh TPD by 2050.

The WTEs have also triggered widespread opprobrium among citizens. For instance, there has been a continuous protest against the Okhla WTE plant for polluting the environment.

In 2016, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) slapped environmental compensation fine of Rs. 25 lakh on the plant.

Moreover, the plants are expensive because they produce power at nearly Rs. 7 per unit, which is more than the Rs. 3-5 offered by thermal as well as solar sources.

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