

## Is Coimbatore ready for a 'trash' course?

Can 2018 bring about a change in the way the city looks at its waste? I really hope so, living as I do at an apartment where next to the gate is a dumpster with putrefying waste overflowing. I am responsible for some of that rotting stuff along with the inmates of the 69 other homes in the complex. As you have realised by now, we do not segregate waste; at least not in any serious manner. But just down the road, a couple of hundred meters away, is another apartment complex where residents have figured out a way to manage their waste so that not only are their surroundings clean, but they also contribute to the bigger good by not sending huge volumes of garbage to the Vellalore landfill.

The moving force behind these good Samaritans is 'No Dumping', a registered trust that hopes to realise Cities without Dumpsites. Begun in Coimbatore in January 2016 with two communities with a total of 400 homes, today there are 40 communities in the fold with 4,000 households that dispose their waste in a responsible way.

Rajalakshmi NR is a volunteer who, along with nine others, is dedicated to spreading the good word. She refuses to see the glass as half empty and instead says, "Segregation is not such a challenge. It is what comes after that is the stumbling block. What is lacking is not awareness but empathy. Much of this is because we do not know what happens to the waste after it crosses our thresholds." Rajalakshmi is convinced all that is required is a small change in our habits. She and her team have seen enough success stories to be convinced that it is doable.

"We have put in place an SOP that hand-holds gated communities and apartment blocks, as they make the transition from littering to responsible waste management. No Dumping takes care of waste disposal end to end. Our model works in three stages: the Waste Generation Point, Collection Level and Waste Management." (See Box)

The collected wet waste goes to the Corporation's Composting Yard. The dry waste is further segregated and sent for recycling. What happens to the quantities of garbage that are not recyclable? "In Coimbatore, it is used by ACC Cement as alternative fuel. When burnt at high temperatures, the garbage does not pollute as much." Sanitary waste goes to the landfill at the moment, she says, but efforts are on to incinerate them to bring down the harmful effect on the environment. No Dumping is looking for sponsors to get more incinerators to deal with sanitary waste and a tipper, as they now have only one given by the Corporation.

The initiative has gathered steam with many gated communities and apartments embracing their module. What is heartening is that a few college campuses are also taking the initiative. At the SNR and Rathinam Colleges, No Dumping is working closely with teaching staff, students, housekeeping as well as NSS volunteers. "Workshops are on and infrastructure is being set up with bins, collection carts and so on." With some help from No Dumping, INS Agrani has installed an organic waste converter machine in their campus.

The CREDAI, Coimbatore (Confederation of Real Estate Developers Association of India) has signed an MOU undertaking with No Dumping. "It has extended a commitment to make all its member properties as a 'no dumping' one," says Rajalakshmi. The approximate cost of cleaning up our city is 100 per household per month. Are we up for it?

### How it works

**Two-bin one-bag system** Each home is given a green bin, a red bin and a white bag. Householders have to put wet waste (vegetable and fruit peels, seeds, food waste, etc.) into the

green bin. Sanitary waste (ear buds, sanitary towels, diapers, medical wastes, etc. ) go into the red bin and the dry recyclable waste such as cartons, bottles, plastic covers, paper wastes, cloth, old footwear, etc.) go into the white bag.

**Collection** Pushcarts come door to door on each floor of the apartment and the housekeeping staff transfer the waste from the home bins and bags into bigger two bins and a bag on the pushcarts. No Dumping trains the staff on how to efficiently accomplish this task. The collection is usually completed by 9.00 am every day.

**Pick-up point** The pushcarts are then positioned close to the gates where separate No Dumping vehicles pick up the segregated garbage and drive off. The gated community/apartment staff help loading the vehicle.

### **Info you can use**

Interested apartments and gated communities can contact No Dumping by mailing them at [contactus@nodumping.in](mailto:contactus@nodumping.in), call them at 8190000400 or visit their website [www.nodumping.in](http://www.nodumping.in)

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