

# DRAFT POLICY SEEKS TO PLUG GAPS IN IMPLEMENTATION OF WASTE LAWS

Relevant for: Indian Society | Topic: Urbanization, their problems and their remedies incl. Migration & Smart Cities

Waste management is one of the key areas where significant work has not been done

Waste generation is inextricably linked to urbanization and economic development. From collection of waste to disposal, cities are struggling to implement an affordable and sustainable model. Currently, India generates about 62 million tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW). It is evident that waste generation in cities is increasing by 5% each year because of growing population and consumption. With poor systems of segregation, recycling and reuse, wastes including hazardous wastes (includes biomedical, plastics, domestic hazardous wastes and e-wastes) are improperly disposed, endangering the environment and human health.

It is clear that waste management is one of the key areas where significant work has not been done to push for objectives of the circular economy (CE) model that seeks to restore and regenerate, and also reduce waste by replacing the end-of-life concept. Reduced waste generation through closing the loop using CE and resource efficiency (RE) approaches will not only reduce pollution associated with waste disposal but also save related costs in resolving the short-term trade-offs between growth and environmental sustainability towards enhancing the overall security of human beings.

In this context, the new draft National Resource Efficiency Policy (NREP), 2019 is guided by few key principles namely, reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels, in keeping with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and staying within the planetary boundaries; creation of higher value with less material through resource efficient and circular approaches; waste minimization; material security and creation of employment opportunities, and business models beneficial to the cause of environment protection and restoration.

The draft has proposed significant policy instruments like addressing regulatory gaps in implementation of waste laws, landfill taxes, high tipping fees especially for bulk generators of waste, etc.

The National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA) will be mandated to drive the agenda of resource efficiency by designing database templates for material use and waste generated and recycled and landfilled, across various sectors and life cycle stages and across different regions (states/zones).

In order to promote maximum plastic recycling, the draft has proposed 100% recycling and reuse of PET plastic by 2025 and 75% recycling and reuse rate of other plastic packaging materials by 2030.

The draft policy also mentions a ban on disposal of recyclable waste to landfills by 2025. Concerning construction and demolition (C&D) waste, it mentions that municipalities in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities should start inventorizing C&D waste data by 2022. Recycling rate for C&D waste should reach 50% by 2025 and 75% by 2030.

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