

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## Plastic use: Mumbai casts a tight net, yet half of its waste slips through

Chittaranjan Tembhekar / TNN / Jun 16, 2023, 07:23 IST



In percentage terms, plastic might not be a big part of Mumbai's waste problem, but even then thousands of tonnes of plastic waste remains unprocessed in the metropolis every year. Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) own statistics for 2022 show the city generates about 6,400 tonnes of solid waste daily. Of this, 73% is 'wet' or food waste. The remaining 27% – roughly 6.3 lakh tonnes every year – comprises all kinds of dry waste, including 3.2% plastic. The problem, however, lies with the low recycling rate. Last year, only 47,000 tonnes of dry waste – including 12,402 tonnes of plastic – was recycled. That means, about half of Mumbai's plastic waste ended up in landfills or got buried under soil and washed into water bodies. A white paper by Praja Foundation, an organization working in the field of urban governance, shows only 425 tonnes of electronic waste and 408 tonnes of thermocol were recycled in Mumbai last year.

Experts say Mumbai can recycle more by segregating waste at source. Although a BMC environment status report shows waste segregation increased from 65% in 2017-18 to 81% in 2021-22, they point out this was due to the establishment of 55 drywaste segregation centres.

For example, data shows 90% of dry waste – including paper, cardboard and plastic articles – collected from Mumbai’s 24 wards was recycled. But again, this data is from the 55 dry-waste centres. A senior BMC official involved in solid waste management also told TOI that the plastic collected through the formal system in the city “never goes back into the environment”. The official, who did not wish to be named, explained that about 1,000 tonnes of dry waste – mainly paper and plastics – is segregated every day at the Kanjurmarg landfill, Mumbai’s largest. From this, about 500 tonnes of clean waste is recycled, while the remaining soiled waste is used as fuel in boilers and factories. As for the 4,000-odd tonnes of unsegregated wet waste added daily at the Kanjurmarg landfill, it is “put in bioreactors and after five years it is excavated for further processing”.

Stressing on the need for segregation at source, Kedar Sohoni, founder-director of Green Communities Foundation, said if all households segregate their waste, and this waste is treated properly, Mumbai would move up on the Centre’s Swachh rankings.

Link : <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/plastic-use-mumbai-casts-a-tight-net-yet-half-of-its-waste-slips-through/articleshow/101031484.cms>