

Educating the public on responsible waste disposal a huge challenge

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“Segregation of waste at source and disposing it in a responsible manner will help in dealing with the garbage crisis to a great extent”, remarked Saltanat Kazi, Researcher, The Energy Research Institute (TERI), during her talk on *‘Importance and Benefits of Source Segregation’* held on the 23rd April, 2014. The talk was part of talks held to commemorate World Earth Day organized by The International Centre Goa in association with TERI and Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development_(RCE). The talk began with screening of a 18 minute documentary, *Half a View* , set in Mumbai. The film illustrated how the city has changed through the decades from a city of dreams and aspirations to a metropolis struggling to deal with the woes of thrash and garbage.

Shabana Kazi, also from TERI said that “it is a humongous task to educate the general public to dispose waste in the correct way”. It is important to generate awareness on how to dispose waste by segregating it into wet and dry waste at the source itself. The wet waste is biodegradable and used for composting; whereas dry waste; plastics and metals, are usually recycled. If this practice is efficiently carried out then the benefits are both economic where one can generate lucrative income, and environmental - where there is considerable decrease in pollution levels and increase in soil fertility. The participants were also advised to visit the recycling station at ICG, where the dry waste is segregated and sold to scrap dealers and the wet waste is composted to manure which is used in ICG gardens.

She added that new marketing techniques of branding and packaging of commodities is adversely contributing to garbage generation. Due to market competition, consumer goods are packed in attractive wrappers and multiple packaging; generally not necessary. This ultimately generates more litter than usual, thereby causing difficulty in garbage management. One of the serious threats cited was disposal of tetra packs, if unregulated, can amplify the crisis further. However, tetra pack material, if correctly disposed, can be recycled into roofing sheets and furniture boards which can be constructively utilized.

The group discussion with the participants highlighted some tips on how to encourage the public to collect recyclables such as old batteries and empty milk packets and deliver them to collection centers for incentives. In conclusion, a special focus was made to

create general awareness on responsible disposal of wastes so as to enable its convenient handling and management.

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