



A Study on Domestic Solid Waste Management Among Green Friends

KEYWORDS

focus group discussion, imposing fine, dignity, domestic solid waste

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ABSTRACT Handling of domestic solid waste management poses a threat and wastes are generated in large amount owing to the increase in the population. The waste generation and accumulation is a serious problem in urban areas. Proper handling of waste and its disposal is the need of the hour. Green friends are self-help group members working in collection and handling of domestic solid waste. Green friends mostly consists of women from marginalized communities, who were earlier working as daily wage labourers in menial jobs. Focus group discussion was carried out with 36 green friends in three batches, twelve each in three batches. The discussion revolved around the themes on public awareness on domestic solid waste, acceptance of green friends by public, health hazards and their challenges and opportunities in domestic solid waste management. The focus group discussion revealed that green friends are treated with dignity and they themselves has a dignity towards labour. The study helped in better understanding of domestic solid waste management in Madukkarai Town Panchayat.

INTRODUCTION

The logical starting point for the proper management of solid waste is to reduce the amounts of waste that must be managed, either informally managed within the generator's site or formally (externally) managed by another entity once the waste is discarded by the generator (UNEP, 2005). Misra & Mani (1993) said about one-fifth of India's total population lives in urban agglomerations and generates approximately 15 million tonnes of solid waste every year. Municipal solid wastes have a compostable potential of 60-90%. Typical composition include 5.25% of paper/cardboard, 0.6-0.9% plastics items, 0.1-0.7% glass, 30-40% sand/finer earth, 0.6-1% of metals, 50-70% of organic matter (Kasthuri, 2003). Millennium Development Goal 7 'Ensure Environmental Sustainability' urges for clean and green environment.

GREEN FRIENDS

Green friends are self-help group members involved in collection and handling of domestic waste from Madukkarai town panchayat, Coimbatore. Green friends mostly consists of women from marginalized communities, who were earlier working as daily wage labourers in menial jobs. They were not respected by the communities as they were working as menial workers. An NGO recruited them and explained what self-help group is and empowered them. In the collection and handling of domestic waste, green friends are given personal protective equipment while in work and regular medical check-up are organized. Proper training is given to them in this regard and they get a stable income as compared to menial jobs. Now the community respects them as a fellow human being. This study analyse the green friends' views on domestic solid waste management in Madukkarai Town Panchayat, Coimbatore district.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vimal and Tyagi (1982) proposed organic recycling of wastes to generate energy and employment besides solving environmental problems. Devi and Satyanarayanan (2001) said the yearly average increase in solid waste in

Indian cities is estimated almost 5% (as cited in Agarwal et al, 2005). Hunchaisri (2012) in his study found out that participation in community waste management increased. After training the participants showed higher participation (Mean: 4.42 than before training (Mean: 3.48) at significant level 0.05. He attributed the increase to Participatory Action Research. Pacione (2005) asserted that the main problems facing developing country cities with regard to waste management are related to the collection of waste from the city environments, with between one-third and one-half of all the waste generated in the cities remaining uncollected. Swarup et al (1992) said that the growing use of packing materials as the major source of household waste. The use of paperboard has been growing at an annual rate of 4.5%.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Focus groups can find about people's feelings, attitudes and opinions about a topic of interest. Focus groups are aimed at encouraging participants to talk with each other, rather than answer questions directly to the moderator. The group interaction of focus groups is important because it gives us some understanding of how the people are thinking about the topic (Dawson et al, 1993). Focused group discussion (FGD) was conducted with three batches of green friends. Each batch consisted of 12 green friends. Each FGD took place for about 50- 60 minutes. The researcher was the moderator for the FGD and one more person was recruited for noting down the discussion points. The rules and guidelines for the FGD was explained to the participants before the start of FGD.

THEMES FOR THE FGD

- Awareness of Community regarding classification of waste
- Waste Disposable Methods
- Awareness about Clean & Green Project
- Health hazards caused due to improper waste disposal
- List of waste generated everyday
- Acceptance of people to pay money for collecting

garbage from home

- Green friends' attitude towards domestic solid waste management
- Community attitude towards domestic solid waste management
- How the community people treat the green friends
- Suggestion for improvements in domestic solid waste management

FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSION

- All the Green friends have dignity towards their job.
- The uniforms, safety gear and the identity cards given to them boosted their morale and dignity towards their work.
- The segregation of waste is very minimal in garbage disposal.
- Most of the people agreed that people every day hand over their garbage regularly to them.
- All through the discussion, there wasn't a feeling that they are rag pickers or doing the lowest form of work in the society.
- Majority of the people in the community treated Green friends with dignity and respect.
- The community expects to provide dust bins and segregation bags to each house hold for the waste to be segregated.
- The community mind set is very strong that the segregation of waste is not their responsibility.
- Green friends face difficulty with people residing in this panchayat who do not know Tamil language
- There is a lack of community collection bins, which is a huge hurdle in disposing the garbage in the respective wards.
- Green Friends requested rain coat, as it is difficult for them to operate during rainy season.

- Some of the houses still throw their garbage outside their house stating that they can't wait for them to arrive and collect.
- The solid wastes sometimes has food waste which has been kept for days and put together as garbage and handed to them, which emits huge stink and makes them difficult to segregate and dispose.
- Sometimes people dispose all kind of garbage as house hold waste which Green Friends found difficult in carrying in their cart.
- The Green friends insisted to put fine for those who are not disposing the garbage properly.
- They also had some repairs in their collection bins.
- The organic compost shed should be repaired and the water connection to be given.
- They also wanted to be trained in creating kitchen garden.
- For effective garbage disposal, Green Friends insisted on collecting fees from the community for disposing of garbage waste.

Conclusion

The Focus Group Discussion to some extent served as a ventilation for the Green friends as they expressed their feelings, opinions and suggestions towards domestic solid waste management. The discussion from the group showed they are very much interested towards clean and green project in Madukkarai Town Panchayat. The green friends raised concerns over the rainy seasons as collection and handling of waste is cumbersome in the rainy season and only few households mix both degradable and non-degradable waste. On a whole the discussion served as a platform for increasing the volume of better work in domestic solid waste management in Madukkarai Town Panchayat.

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