

New compost yard promises to rid Madurai of garbage

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MADURAI: Yet another effort is being made to clean up the city. A new compost yard set up as a public private initiative under JnNURM is set to start functioning soon. It has set an ambitious target of clearing Madurai city of its garbage dumps and hopes to process perishable waste into organic manure.

Speaking to The Times of India, Madurai mayor V V Rajan Chellappa said Madurai Municipal Waste Processing Company Private Ltd, the waste processing unit set up in Vellaikal near Madurai airport, would become operational by the end of this month.

Sanction for this project, which has been set up at a cost of Rs. 57 crore, was made under the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM) programme, in 2007.

Clearances from the pollution control board and the aviation ministry -- it is in the vicinity of the airport - for the plant which was set up in 2010 through a public-private partnership model between the Madurai Corporation and private firm SPML Infra Ltd have been received.

The 100 wards in the Madurai Corporation generate about 600 tonnes of mixed waste of which 20% is degradable. This will be converted into rich organic manure, which will be sold in bulk and also in retail as per demand. Output of degradable waste goes up to even 40% of total mixed waste during festival season, when large crowds throng the streets of Madurai.

As of now, a tonne of this rich manure works out to about Rs. 3,000 plus taxes. Three-hundred-and-fifty garbage collection tippers will bring the mixed waste and dump it in the 68-acre yard. The waste will be segregated into biodegradable and non-biodegradable in the various units of the plants.

According to **Rishabh Sethi**, Executive Director of SPML, they would operate it for 20 years and if not immediately, the plants' functioning would definitely make Madurai free of garbage dumps in the next two to three years. The non-degradable waste would be converted into scientific landfills before disposal.

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- The plant was set up in 2010 through a PPP model between the Madurai Corporation and private firm SPML Infra Ltd.
- The 100 wards in the Madurai Corporation generate about 600 tonnes of mixed waste of which 20% is degradable.
- This will be converted into rich organic manure, which will be sold in bulk and also in retail as per demand.
- As of now, a tonne of this rich manure works out to about Rs. 3,000 plus taxes.
- 350 garbage collection tippers will bring the mixed waste and dump it in the 68-acre yard, after which segregation will take place.

Granulated manure will be packed in 50-kg bags and will be available in the market a few days after the plant starts operations. At present, in many of the newly-added wards of the Madurai Corporation, private operators collect garbage from home for a fee and dump it on the outskirts of the city. Most of the garbage collected in Melamadai, Gomathypuram and Anna Nagar are dumped into the channels flowing through these areas, while a large portion is dumped along the bund of the Vandiyur tank.

"This should be avoided and people should be strictly informed of segregating wastes in their homes for proper disposal," said Senthura Pandian, a retired professor, who says that moves to make Madurai garbage-free never materialised even when it had lesser wards.