

NISER study blows lid off city's waste disposal practices

HEMANT KUMAR ROUT
@ Bhubaneswar

A study by researchers of National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) has blown the lid off the reasons why Bhubaneswar, that had topped the smart city challenge in 2016, never figured in the top-10 cleanest cities of the country.

As per the study, while around 20 per cent of the city's respondents admitted to have thrown waste in the open, 14 per cent burnt their waste, only two per cent recycled their waste and one per cent composted it. The method of waste disposal also varied as 57 per cent of the city respondents gave their waste to the civic body and seven per cent kept it in dustbins outside their homes.

The study conducted in 2022 also found that the citizens were not cooperating with governing bodies negatively impacting urban governance. "This is evident through poor segregation, littering behaviour and inadequate waste management in Bhubaneswar denoting political ecological relationship," said associate professor of NISER Pranay Kumar Swain.

While average waste generation by about 75 per cent of the respondents was up to 5 kg, 22 per cent had an average of six to 10 kg of waste generation per day and only one per cent of the households had more than 15 kg of waste generation. The remaining four per cent of the respondents were unaware of the quantity of waste their households generate. There is no single cause of waste-related is-



FILTHY SMART CITY

20 pc

of respondents admitted to have thrown waste in the open

Only two per cent respondents recycled their waste

One per cent composted it

58 per cent of respondents gave their waste to the civic body

sues in the city. Both humans and animals give rise to multiple social factors of poor waste management through their social actions leading to major environmental and societal issues such as urban flood, environmental pollution, social inequality, and injustice.

Around 55 per cent had to face the problem of disease transmission and infection due to unsafe waste disposal in

their neighbouring areas. The unpleasant environment was the second most important issue faced by 13 per cent respondents.

The unscientific and improper waste management, Swain said, put further pressure on the ecosystem of the city as the waste accumulated day by day adversely affected the health of humans and animals, leading to substantial social and

economic costs.

The study also showed a hierarchical and conflicting relationship among the city dwellers, tenants, and social groups belonging to lower socio-economic backgrounds, making the solid waste management issues inseparable from caste, class, gender, and social segregation.

"The patriarchal practices in household waste management is evident as only women shoulder the burden of segregating and managing waste. Even state authorities motivate women to segregate and participate in cleanliness drives organised by them. There is a latent conflict between higher and lower-class city dwellers as they both blame each other for littering," the study report stated.

Scan me



THE NEW
**INDIAN
EXPRESS**

Article published in:

The New Indian Express, 08.02.2024,
Bhubaneswar Edition, Page No. 02