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Illegal dumping throws up 300 mini Mandurs

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BANGALORE: A civic amenity site near Mallathahalli Lake in West Bangalore was a favourite play area for children in the vicinity, until last year. When the city's garbage crisis first erupted, trucks began unloading waste on this site. Construction debris from nearby localities too made its way here. Today, the unauthorized dump has grown 10 feet high, much to the dismay of nearby residents, visitors to the lake and most of all, the kids.

The Mallathahalli dump is just one of the about 300 unauthorized sites in and around the city where solid waste is unloaded illegally round the year, posing health hazards to residents in the vicinity, finds a team of experts from IISc.

The IISc team, studying "Unauthorized Dumping in Bangalore" for some years now, found that such dumps have spread out in all directions of the city but mostly located on the periphery. The study was conducted by Prof Chanakya HN, Shwetamala and Prof TV Ramachandra from the Centre for

Sustainable Technologies, IISc.

"The unauthorized dump yards keep mushrooming and shifting from place to place. They are usually on lakebeds or in residential areas on the outskirts of the city dotted by vacant sites and less-populated areas. We have photos of all the unauthorized dump yards. The revised report for 2013-14 will shortly be released," said Shwetamala.

Experts say unauthorized dumping helps contractors save cost or cover up delayed arrival at processing units. "Bulk waste producers like apartment and marriage halls are hand-in-glove with garbage truck contractors. The latter take waste from bulk producers and dump them in unauthorized centres," said a team member, on the condition of anonymity.

What IISc study dug up about illegal dumping

- * Annually, illegally dumped waste accounts for 3.34 lakh tonnes or 10% of total garbage.
- * 83,557 tonnes dumped for the three months when study was carried out.
- * Height of dump sites varies from 4 inches to as high as 20 feet.
- * North east and south east parts of city has more number of such sites..
- * Waste includes plastic, industrial, organic, construction debris and remnants from recycling units among others
- * Plastic waste dumped at 82 sites, while construction debris forms 61% of illegally dumped waste

Segregation is only solution

Waste has been commodified to make money out of it. Thus unauthorized dumping continues. This depicts the BBMP's failure in implementing mandatory segregation and composting of wet waste at source. Landfills are a failure, worldwide. The only solution is to campaign for segregation of waste and to make sure that waste produced in the city does not leave the city. | Bhargavi S Rao, environmentalist, Environment Support Group

There is a high court order to get segregation process monitored by members of ward committees. There is no scientific approach to solid waste management.

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