

## 6<sup>th</sup> – Garbage in Garbage Out II



### Plastic: a boon or a curse

The word 'plastic' is derived from a Greek word 'plastikos' meaning capable of being shaped or moulded. It is made up of petroleum. Most of the things we use in our daily life are made up of plastic. Toothbrushes, toys, carry bags, buckets, water bottles, and many parts of computer monitors, etc., are all made up of plastic. Plastics are used in a wide range of products from paper clips to spaceships due to their lightweight, relatively low cost and resistance to water and microorganisms. Plastics can be given any shape, colour. Plastics are very durable. **All this has made plastic a boon for us.**

Plastics degrade very-very slowly. So, they come in the category of non-biodegradable materials. The use of plastic has also created many other problems for us. These problems are actually associated with the way we use plastics: some are:

1. We often take plastic carry bags for shopping. After use, we generally throw them away. These plastic bags get into drains and block them. As a result, the dirty water spills on the roads that become breeding ground for the mosquitoes. The blocked drains could also cause flood-like situation during heavy rains.
2. We often through household garbage basically kitchen waste or leftover food in the plastic bags. The stray animals often eat these carry bags block along with the food. The bags can block their digestive canal and may take their lives also.
3. Many people burn plastic wastes during winters. Burning of plastic releases toxic and poisonous which may cause respiratory problems, eye problems and cancer. **In this way, plastic can be a curse for us.**



### Management Of Biodegradable Wastes

1. Composting: Compost is a natural fertiliser. It contains nutrients required for the growth of plants. So, compost is used as a manure for growing plants. The process of converting biodegradable materials into compost by the action of microorganisms is called composting. Biodegradable or organic waste like vegetables peels, waste food leaves, dead flower and egg shells can be recycled they are converted into manure by burying them in compost pits.

Vermicomposting: the composting process can be fastened with the help of earthworms. The type of earthworms used for composting are called redworms. Redworms are introduced in the waste dumped in a large pit within the soil. These redworms eat the soil along with the waste materials and convert them into compost. The method of preparing compost with the help of red- worms is called Vermicomposting.

2. Landfills: large areas used for waste disposal are called landfills. In a landfill garbage is buried in such a way that it does not damage the environment. Garbage buried inside landfills stay here for a long time as it decomposes very slowly. When the landfill is completely filled, a park may be developed on it. The Indraprastha Park in New Delhi is an example.

3. Incineration: Hospital waste is hazardous to health if dumped in the open. So, it needs to be disposed of very carefully. Solid wastes like syringes and needles, which are used in hospitals, are burnt at a high temperature in a special kind of furnace called 'incinerator'. Garbage, when burnt, turns into ash, which is then safely disposed of in a landfill.



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**Benefits of waste management:** the basic approach to the management and control of wastes involves production of minimum waste, proper disposal of waste and following 3R's.:

- Reduces air, water and land pollution
- Conserves natural resources like trees and metals
- Save electricity and resources required for producing new products
- Provided healthy and cleaner environment



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