

Executive Summary

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Why CAG did this Audit?

Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) in urban areas has emerged as one of the biggest challenges today. The situation is aggravated by rapid urbanisation. Inadequate management of waste has significant negative externalities in terms of public health and environmental outcomes. Besides, it has an adverse impact on the aesthetic appearance of the surroundings. The Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016 provide a legal framework for the disposal and management of Solid waste and entrusts responsibilities at the State level, ULBs and on the generators of waste. Audit was taken up to assess the implementation of these rules by ULBs.

Major Audit Observations

The Detailed Project Reports (DPR) of SWM projects were not prepared by following the guidelines. Baseline waste analysis was ineffective and outdated, instances of duplication of DPRs was found. Planning was virtually absent, as it is evident from the fact, that none of the test checked ULBs had prepared MSWM plan and Contingency plan. Audit observed poor management of domestic hazardous waste (DHW) and construction and demolition (C&D) in most of the ULBs.

Even though DPRs was approved and funds were available, the infrastructure projects were not created, in any of the test checked ULBs, in the given time limit, prescribed under SWM Rules. In two ULBs, the preliminary step of identification/ procurement of suitable sites for the project was yet to be done. Bioremediation or capping of old and abandoned dump sites were done only in one, out of five ULBs, resulting in accumulation of legacy waste and consequent environmental issues.

On an average, five to eight *per cent* of waste generated was not collected in the State and eight to 16 *per cent* in the test checked ULBs. Only 3.13 *per cent* (0.09 *per cent* at source, 0.81 *per cent* at transfer stations and 2.23 *per cent* at processing sites) of the collected waste was segregated. Ragpickers were not recognized and integrated in waste management process in most of the ULBs. Sixty four *per cent* of the vehicles used for waste transportation were not covered, uniforms and personal protection equipment were not being given/used by workers handling solid waste in majority of ULBs.

Secondary Storage/transfer stations were set up near the residential areas, National Highways, Canals and in open grounds of the ULBs. Sanitary Landfill (SLF) sites were available in only two ULBs. In absence of SLF, the maximum waste was dumped in open sites. There were 13 dumpsites covering 75,074 sq. meter area and having 3,63,019 tons of waste which were lying in an open dumpsite area of the ULBs. Physical verification of the dumping sites revealed instances of waste was seen flowing in river, burning of waste, and dumping in agricultural land.

The standard of environment, maintained by the ULBs, was very poor, which was noticed by the audit during the physical inspection of dump sites of the ULBs. The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) failed to ensure compliance of provisions of SWM Rules from ULBs. In last five years, 88 *per cent* of the ULBs were not reviewed even

once by SPCB. Inter-State movement of waste was underway in two out of 13 test check ULBs without intimation to SPCB. Complaints relating to lack of daily picking up of municipal waste or improper picking up were observed in audit.

What CAG Recommends?

- *The State Government needs to devise systems to assist ULBs in preparation of Solid Waste Management plans/action plans for effective implementation of waste management and monitor their effective implementation.*
- *The State Government should ensure timely creation of the infrastructure of Solid Waste Management projects to avoid adhoc approaches adopted in the collection, storage, transportation, and disposal of the solid waste to save the damaging environment. Responsibility must be fixed at all levels for inordinate delays in preparation, approval, and establishment of SWM projects.*
- *The State Government should encourage segregation of waste at source by devising a system and should prevent mixing of segregated waste during various stages of SWM.*
- *The ULBs should ensure that the vehicles procured for waste transportation are covered and comply with the statutory requirements.*
- *The State Government may draw a time-bound plan for ULBs to achieve the preferred level of reliability of Service Level Benchmark (SLB) data.*
- *The State Pollution Control Board needs to ensure that all concerned, involved in Solid Waste Management functioning, obtain necessary authorisation for their functioning and should enforce adherence to prescribed standards by reviewing implementation as per norms.*
- *The State Government may scientifically assess workload of each ULB and accordingly sanction/deploy human resources.*

Management's response to audit recommendations

During the 'Exit conference' (September 23), the draft material and recommendations made there in, were discussed with concerned Additional Secretary in detail and it was assured that the Department will take needful action, wherever it is required. An updated and revised draft performance report was again issued to the State Government Department in March 2024 to seek their views/input. However, no response had been received till April 2024.