

Making use of Compost

What is the issue?

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Compost derived from biodegradable waste will ensure sustainable solid waste disposal by following waste to health mechanism.

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What are the challenges in solid waste disposal?

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- Proper collection, separation, transportation and disposal of solid waste to some distant preferably out of sight is not made in India.

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- Processing and treating different streams of solid waste, and safe disposal of the residuals in scientific landfills, has received much less attention.

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- In recent times unscientific landfill practices have led to man-made disasters such as Deonar (Mumbai), Bellandur (Bangalore), and Ghazipur (Delhi).

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- The use of incinerator for disposal of mixed waste is a financially and environmentally expensive solutions, since toxic emissions looms large from this method.

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How compost will ensure proper solid waste management?

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- Compost is an organic matter that has been decomposed and recycled as a fertilizer and soil amendment, it is a key ingredient in organic farming.

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- In this method compost is produced from biodegradable waste collected from the city, it provides an alternative to farmyard manure.

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- It is rich in microbial content that helps plants to take up soil nutrients.
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- It provides an opportunity to simultaneously clean up the cities and help improve agricultural productivity and quality of the soil.
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What is the need for such compost?

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- Excessive and imbalanced use of chemical fertilisers has led to severe deterioration in the quality of soil.
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- Only about 20 -50 per cent of the nitrogen in urea is absorbed by plants, remaining pollute surface water with nitrogen runoff.
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- Organic manure or compost plays a very important role as a supplement to chemical fertilisers in replenishing the nutrient-depleted soils.
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- The addition of compost or organic manure reduces nitrogen wastage, as its humus absorbs the nitrogen and acts like a slow release sponge.
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What are the advantages of such compost?

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- The water holding capacity of the soil which uses compost helps with drought-proofing.
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- It is rich in organic carbon which is an essential element of integrated plant nutrient management, as it increases the productivity of other fertilisers.
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- Horticulture crops grown with compost have better flavour, size, colour and shelf-life.
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- It reduces input costs for farmers, since it is weed-free, makes soil porous, roots stronger and resistant to pests and decay.
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- Landfills would be cleaned up for production of this compost and the fields around them would be much more productive.

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What are the challenges with availability of this compost?

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- The availability of this compost is purely based on proper delivery mechanisms, which is lagging in India.
- Government Schemes made for composite has not worked well because of its administrative complexity
- The high volume but low value nature of compost makes it not so attractive for fertiliser marketing companies to promote its use.
- Compost manufacturers feels harder to meet the quality specifications laid down by the Fertiliser Control Order (FCO).

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How the challenges can be addressed?

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- Government policies which safe guards the interest of fertilizer manufactures should be formulated.
- The state agricultural departments can help to facilitate the use of city compost through their widespread extension networks.
- Fertiliser companies need to make vigorous efforts to market city compost using their well-connected dealer channels.
- Subsidies for the city compost based fertiliser will promote its use among farmers and it also promotes companies to co-market the compost.

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Source: Indian Express

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