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Little steps to manage solid waste

Special Correspondent

Did you know that your ordinary carbon paper used to make copies of letters, bills and documents cannot be recycled?

There are a list of 15 such items including broken ceramic, items made of thermocol, styrofoam, bubblegum, brown PET bottles, toothpaste and cosmetics holders, aluminium-coated wrappers and green glass bottles that cannot be recycled.

These are ordinary things used in day-to-day routines. But how many of us know that these things cannot be recycled, asked C. Srinivasan, project director Indian Green Service, Vellore, speaking at a workshop on waste management organised by Athena Infonomics and the British High Commission on Monday.

Mr. Srinivasan explained that the Central and State pollution control boards have not asked manufacturers to refrain from using items that cannot be recycled.

“Though in other countries there are technologies for recycling some of these items, in India the market is zero. The boards can easily ask manufacturers to not use coloured bottles. They can direct them to use uniform-sized bottles so that there is a viable market for recycling,” he added.

Mr. Srinivasan said that zero waste was possible in both the urban and rural set ups. In the urban set up, it only required more manpower.

“It can be a good economic activity and provide employment as well as bring in money to local bodies,” Mr. Srinivasan explained.

Non-governmental organisation SUSTAIN’s managing trustee, M.G. Devasahayam, said that in the name of solid waste management, all that is being done in Chennai is collection of garbage and dumping at the sites in Perungudi and Kodungaiyur.

“In 1998, Exnora International and the civil society gave a solution to the State that had just 6 per cent waste being sent to landfill sites. But that was not taken up and instead, three private agencies have come and tried their hand only to do the same thing as the Chennai Corporation,” he said.

The need of the hour is a decentralised system where garbage does not leave its ward and every piece of garbage is recycled, he added.

Broken ceramic, styrofoam, bubblegum, among many common items that cannot be recycled

City needs a decentralised system where every piece of garbage is recycled, says expert

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