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Makeover for waste dump in Alandur

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Chennai: For close to five years, about 200 families in Hindu Colony, Nanganallur, have been fighting for shifting a stinking garbage dumping yard in their locality.

The Alandur municipality, under whose limits Nanganallur falls, has finally decided to address the residents' demand. It has no plans to shift the dumping yard though. Instead, the civic agency has promised to convert it into an odour-less vermi-compost yard to help residents live with it.

The technical assistance for the project will be provided by Kancheepuram-based non-governmental organisation, Hand-In-Hand (HIH). Alandur will be the first municipality in Chennai's suburbs to set up a compost yard in the heart of a residential colony, to convert garbage into manure.

The municipality will provide the requisite infrastructure, power and water suppl for this novel Rs 7 lakh project. Once the yard starts operating, it would also collect garbage from Alandur and Nanganallur markets and dump it at the compost yard, a 2,300 sq ft plot right in the middle of a residential area. It will be HIH's responsibility to run the yard in an environmentally-friendly manner, ensure proper conversion of waste into manure, without stench emanating from it.

As HIH will be expected to handle about three tonnes of waste from the two markets on a daily basis, the municipality will pay the NGO Rs two lakh per annum.

About 80 % of this garbage would be converted to manure using microbes and worms. It will roughly take 30 days for the garbage to get converted to manure, said Shiva Krishnamurthy, project manager of HIH.

The manure would be HIH's property and would be sold at Rs 15 per kg. The compost yard would provide employment to 10 people, Shiva Krishnamurthy added.

"We had been fighting for shifting this yard for close to five years now. Municipality's present decision will be a big relief for the residents," S Ramakrishnan, a senior citizen, told The Times of India.

Owing to non-availability of space, the local body has been hitherto using the plot as a secondary dumping yard for segregation of nonbiodegradable waste from degradable garbage before dumping it in Pallikaranai.

The Nanganallur project will be different from the ones functioning in Pammal, Madambakkam, Sholinganallur, Perungudi, Sembakkam and Kunrathur as household waste will not be treated at the Alandur compost yard.

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WEALTH FROM WASTE: Staff at the vermi compost yard at Naganallur segregating the market waste to be converted to manure (Left) the vermi compost yard set up by Alandur Municipality and an NGO capable of converting 110 tonnes of market waste into manure