Richards Town residents lead the way

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BANGALORE: The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP)'s grand plans to redress the mounting garbage problem by getting waste segregated at source has been an exercise in futility.

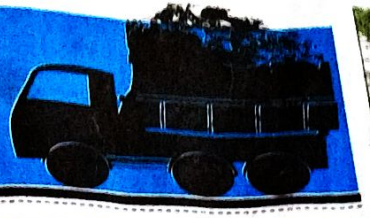
But even as the civic agency struggles to overcome the crisis, residents of Richards Town near Frazer Town have a 10-year-old segregation system to showcase — an effort initiated by the residents that has stood the test of time.

This is one model residents in other parts of the City could emulate.

The scheme was so successful that Richards Town was declared a model ward for segregation in 2003. Deeply affected by the accumulating dirt on Vittal Mallya Road in 2002, Richards Town Residents' Association had started the process of waste segregation with the help of Bangalore Agenda Task Force (BATF). Heaps of garbage spilling out of bins had triggered this unique project by the citizenry.

Snehalatha Naidu, a resident, said: "One could actually notice drivers from around the neighbourhood unload waste into the bin."

Managing waste, solidly - 1



The Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike is struggling to correct its poor waste management record. But there are many success stories in the City where proactive citizens have devised ways and means to tackle the problem in their own unique ways. Here are some examples, serialised.

People were appointed to keep a watch on each street to ensure garbage was not dumped there. Polluters were personally identified and educated about the consequences of their action. "It is a constant 24 hour, 7 days a week and 365 days a year process of dissemination (of awareness). People will never let go of the "chalta hai" (lackadaisical) attitude so dominant in India. Our motto is to preach till we embarrass them and it is evidently working. It is the best way to reach out," said Naidu,

The now defunct BATF helped the residents work out a deal with the then Bangalore City Corporation to arrange special vans to collect segregated waste. Segregation at the individual stage was in place, but the final handling of it was not in the hands of the environmentally friendly residents. At this point, the Corporation was apprehensive and did not completely accept and comprehend the idea.

Zafar Sait, president of the RTRA (Richards Town Residents' Association), said, "In 2002, the Corporation was not open to the concept of waste management and did not completely accept the idea. The indifference of the government at a local level was an obstacle we overcame. In fact, the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike is still not carrying out segregation efficiently. The burden of waste can be reduced if the government provides us with shredders for garden waste, which can be composted."

SPICK AND SPAN: A squeaky-clean Richards Park. PHOTO COURTESY PRADEEP E SINNAS

The project was reactivated in 2010 with the 'Wealth out of Waste' campaign, which was a door-to-door initiative implemented in association the Indian Tobacco Company (ITC). The plan entailed depositing wet waste with the BBMP and selling dry waste for a meagre amount to ITC.

Today, ITC personnel visit Richards Town every Thursday to purchase the week's recyclable waste. After recycling, the waste is utilised for their own production. The prospect of making some cheap change motivates residents to deposit their waste with ITC.

Monisha Suresh, an office-bearer of RTRA, says: "Ninety percent of the waste we produce can be possibly recycled; only 10 per cent is sent to the Mandur landfill. ITC picks up 1,000 kilos of waste from Richards Town every week, which sounds like a big number. But in reality, it is very little."

Ironically, the area residents have received a notice from the BBMP about compulsory waste segregation, while the fact remains that more than half of the apartment complexes here religiously practice segregation.

The immaculate surroundings are proof enough!

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Reallotment of BEd seats sought