# Biomining at Perungudi garbage dump showing results, Corporation aims to complete the task by June 2024

## Of the 225-acre garbage dump at Perungudi, about 100 acres of land has been reclaimed, says Corporation official; about two lakh tonnes of refuse derived fuel from Perungudi has been sent to cement factories; Corporation has ambitious plans to set up an integrated waste processing complex at Kodungaiyur

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The Greater Chennai Corporation has been making good progress in biomining of legacy waste at Perungudi. But the daily arrival of huge quantum of unsegregated waste is becoming problematic. | Photo Credit: M. KARUNAKARAN

The Greater Chennai Corporation aims to complete the biomining of legacy waste at Perungudi garbage dump by June 2024 as over 70% of the work has been completed. Over four decades, the dump yard had accumulated around 35 lakh tonnes of waste. According to Geo Dhamin of Poovulagin Nanabargal, biomining is the only way to reclaim acres of land filled with unsegregated waste.

According to an official, 100 acres out of 225 acres of the land at the dump yard has been reclaimed. The entire project was divided into six packages estimated at ₹350 crore. Biomining reduces the carbon dioxide emission every year and will produce refuse derived fuel (RDF) as an alternative to coal in cement factories.

Corporation's Chief Engineer (Solid Waste Management) N. Mahesan says that 2 lakh tonnes of RDF has been sent to cement factories so far with the civic body bearing cost of transportation. "Our priority is to reduce the amount of legacy waste and it is the responsibility of the Corporation to reclaim the land," he says.

Similarly, the project of biomining of legacy waste at Kodungaiyur has been divided into six packages at an estimate of ₹640 crore to process 65 lakh tonnes of waste, almost double the quantum of waste handled at Perungudi. A tender is expected to be called on August 11 for the same.

However, the problem of daily arrival of waste poses a challenge to the biomining effort in both the dump yards. The city generates about 5,500 tonnes of waste every day with one of the two dump yards as the final destination. This implies a never-ending cycle of biomining. "The entry of unsegregated waste continues and the cycle will not end", says Mr. Dhamin.

S. Kumararaja, an activist who has been fighting to save the Pallikarnai marshlands for the past 20 years, says centralised segregation is the problem. "If segregation is done at the zonal or ward level, then it will reduce the pressure on biomining and reduce the quantum of waste dumped. Sometimes, segregation happens at burial grounds, which is highly disrespectful [to the sentiments of the poeple]. The Corporation has extensive open space reserve lands that can be used for this purpose," he says. The problem exists due to lack of strict enforcement, which is slowly being rectified now.

## Manure generated

Manure is one of the products of biomining which the Corporation is selling but is also using for its own purposes.

According to an official, the manure produced out of the waste has to be tested for toxicity. “The manure is used in medians on bus route roads where we want to grow small plants and flowers to beautify the city,” says the official. It is used around the overhead Metro Rail stations to grow plants. “Producing manure from the waste is wrong because it comes from waste dumped over decades, which could be toxic,” says Mr. Dhamin.

The Corporation has big plans to transform Kodungaiyur garbage dump by constructing an integrated waste-to-energy plant and an automated material recovery facility. A Miyawaki forest covering 150 acres of Perungudi is also envisaged, says an official.

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