

Pali Village divided over waste segregation

By: Lina Choudhury-Mahajan

August 20, 2004



Residents claim some people dump their waste in the nearest garbage bin without segregating it

A silent tug of war over garbage segregation is on in Pali Village.

According to the general secretary of the Pali Village Committee (PVC), Asif Farooqui, the problem has risen because only 20 per cent of residents are willing to separate their wet and dry garbage, despite garbage segregation being a BMC rule.

“There are many residents who have been here for a long time and refuse to change their ways,” claims Farooqui, who says residents also objected to several attempts at trying to raise money for a committee, which would carry out garbage segregation and look into other civic activities in the area.

Currently, most families put all their waste into a bag and dump it in the nearest garbage collection bin.

“We even hired a lady to go around and pick up both wet and dry garbage for around Rs 20 or Rs 30 per household per month, but some residents don’t even want to pay her,” points out Farooqui, who says he often sees an occasional piece of garbage floating down from an open window.



Asif Farooqui,
General secretary
of PVC

He adds, “A change in mentality is a must, only then can we all work together.”

Farooqui also filled up the committee coffers when a film crew shot in the village. He has now installed around 20 signboards in the village requesting people not to throw garbage.

“This used to be a beautiful village but times have changed and we need to make adjustments accordingly.



Farooqui has now put up about 20 signboards in the village requesting people not to throw garbage

We can’t expect the BMC to do everything, we have to take the initiative,” says Farooqui, who also recently organised cleanliness drives in the village on two weekends before giving up due to lack of resident participation.

“It has helped to a certain extent but I wish everyone would co-operate with the segregation. It makes it a half-hearted effort when only a few people do it. This could have been a zero-garbage zone,” he says.

Adds another resident, requesting anonymity, "Many of these people have been living here for a long time and they are reluctant to change their way of living. They are unhappy about the change in the garbage collection pattern."

While some residents point out that they do not segregate garbage, they claim that they recycle much of it. "We don't throw wet garbage like meat or prawns as it starts stinking; we would rather give it away to some animal so it gets consumed."

We sell bottles and newspapers to the newspaper seller so very little garbage is left and we throw that in the bin. This kind of disposal works for us," say the Rebellos, who have been living in a cottage in Pali Village for several decades.

These residents feel garbage segregation won't bring any change and are happy and don't see the point.

Adds Venu Concessio who also lives in his ancestral home, "We have a lady who comes and takes away the garbage but we don't segregate wet and dry garbage, because we don't think it will make a big difference to the cleanliness situation. Most of it is dry garbage anyway as we give food scraps to the birds. We keep our surroundings clean."

When contacted an officer from the H-west ward's conservancy department points out that mixing wet and dry garbage creates an extra load on the trucks.

"We have more garbage to carry; as a result we are unable to collect as much as we can. We also have a problem unloading the garbage," he says, adding that they currently have 21 trucks.

According to department officials, people should avoid dumping glass, plastic and disposables like toothpaste tubes along with their wet garbage.

"If wet and dry garbage are dumped together there is a recycling problem."

Each society should have a vermiculture pit where they can dump their leftover vegetables, etc and this will definitely makes our job easier," adds the official.

In case of extreme violation of the BMC rule of segregating garbage, the nuisance detection (ND) squad is sent to the area. "The fines for this violation differ from area to area and depend on the enormity of the problem," he says.

The BMC rule

According to the rule, wet garbage like tea leaves, fruit and vegetable skins, etc. should be put in a separate bag and dry garbage like tubes, bottles, boxes, packets etc in another bag. These can be handed over to the garbage man, who will then find it easy to recycle garbage.