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Public Opinion Survey on the Status of Waste Management in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Solid waste and wastewater management is a critical issue in Sri Lanka. Self-administered 18 questions were used for primary data collection covering 1,158 responses within 25 districts randomly. Age groups of the respondents and their contribution (as a percentage) for the survey were; below 18yrs (3.01%), 18-30yrs (90.59%), 30-45yrs (3.17%) and above 45yrs (1.90%). Among the respondents; 75.09% were undergraduates, 8.89% were employed, 6.13% were school students and, 5.76 were in other institutes of higher education. The time period of the survey was from 20th July 2021 to 6th August 2021. Survey was carried out using online platform (google forms). Questioner was developed to acquire information related to; solid waste, water quality (using taste as a parameter), waste disposal, disposal methods, type of wastes collected, were obtained. This was not merely a household survey, but included waste management done by Municipal councils as well. The objectives of this survey were; to find the quality of water in each area of Sri Lanka, to get an idea about household wastes and the availability of methodical waste disposal facilities, and to obtain ideas from the respondents. According to the data obtained from the survey, 83.77% of the respondents claimed that the consumed water doesn't contain hardness. Also, 56.30% respondents reuse household wastewater while 54.58% respondents dispose of less than 1kg of waste daily. Open dumping areas don't exist for 78.93% of the respondents, 56.39% of the respondents were aware of land-filling but 8.98 % thought that landfill process was not a good solution for garbage disposal. The disposal of non-degradable wastes to the environment was 50.07%. Burnt and open dumping percentages of household wastes were 34.54% and 10.47% respectively. Waste collection by the municipal councils does not happen systematically according to 55.01% respondents. Garbage recycling centers do not exist for 69.34% respondents. The survey showed that knowledge of waste disposal methods and environmental impacts must be improved. Awareness programs have to be conducted to acknowledge the community. Solutions from the respondents included establishing more sanitary land-filling facilities in necessary areas. Encouraging recycling of waste among the communities by conducting awareness programs about recycling companies that buy separated wastes like plastics, papers, glasses etc. which would provide an additional income.

Keywords: Solid waste, Wastewater, Disposal, Land-filling, Garbage