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**Community Willingness and Structural Barriers to Incentive Based Recycling in Sri Lanka****Dissanayake, S.\* , Jayathilaka, M.K.N.A., Amarathunga, C.T., Gunasekara, D.T.T.D.P., Sathsarani, D.A.D.O.V.***Department of Forestry and Environmental Science, Faculty of Applied Sciences,  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka**\*[chanuthamarathunga@gmail.com](mailto:chanuthamarathunga@gmail.com)***Abstract**

Solid waste management remains a growing environmental challenge in Sri Lanka, as public awareness has not translated into effective participation due to structural limitations. This study aims to understand public waste disposal practices and assess community willingness to engage in an incentive-based waste-to-money system. The Data were collected through a structured questionnaire survey administered to 174 respondents across multiple districts, mainly Colombo (25.3%), Gampaha (46.6%), and Kalutara. The survey examined household waste generation sources, disposal frequency, waste composition, existing segregation practices, perceived barriers, and awareness of incentive-based recycling initiatives. The majority of participants were aged between 18 and 35 years. Findings showed that while 73% demonstrate positive environmental intentions, consistent waste separation remains irregular and time consuming. Only occasional practice was reported by 17.2% participants. Structural constraints such as the absence of a proper municipal collection system, limited space for segregation within households, and time constraints were identified as the main obstacles, emphasizing infrastructural rather than attitudinal shortcomings. Household waste generation was around 48% with most households producing 1-3 kg of waste per day, predominantly consisting of food waste and plastics, and disposal commonly occurring every two to three days. Awareness of existing paid recycling initiatives was comparatively low by 32.7%. However, willingness to participate in a waste to money system was notably high by 83.9%, if accessible collection points were established near supermarkets or public areas etc. Respondents (83.3%) illustrate a clear preference for contributing plastic waste, followed by glass, paper, and organic waste, in exchange for financial or material incentives. Overall, this particular study highlights a strong alignment between public enthusiasm and incentive-based recycling models, indicating that a well and properly designed waste-to-money system could effectively bridge and minimize the gap between environmental intention and everyday practice, contributing to a more sustainable and community driven waste management framework in Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** *Incentive recycling, Community engagement, Community willingness, Sustainable behavior, Solid waste management, Waste to money*