

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES

[ISSN 2581-5369]

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Volume 7 | Issue 1

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2024

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# Illegal Dumping of Bio Medical Waste in Tamil Nadu

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## ABSTRACT

*The piece of writing says about illegal dumping of bio medical waste by non-residing of Tamilnadu and residing of Tamilnadu. The reason behind to choose this topic is create awareness to the people with some facts, stats, and overviews. It gives answer for the some questions that are what is bio medical waste and how it categorized, how bio medical wastes are dumped in Tamilnadu and its continuing or not, how we have to protect our environment by implying bio medical waste (management and handling) rule, and also explain causes of dumping bio medical waste in public place and steps taken against this illegal activities. In COVID pandemic, this is noticeable issue in the society because in this medical emergency medical waste also increasing side by side and it is properly segregate or not is a big question only. We are going to carry COVID to our future generation or not, but definitely won't carry these tonnes of waste to our future generation.*

*Healthy environment is human rights of present and future generation also. But its violated by many way which includes worst management of bio medical waste. There is rules for management and handling of BMW(bio medical waste) but how many private hospitals, companies, institutes are follow it and also handling without basic sense of nature. I hope we will perceive the importance of healthy environment in the end of this paper.*

**Keywords:** *Illegal dumping, Bio medical waste, Environment, Awareness.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bio medical waste is kind of waste containing infectious material. It may be solid or liquid and generated from biological and medical sources and activities, such as the diagnosis, prevention, or treatment of diseases. Common generators or producers of biomedical waste include hospitals, health clinics, nursing homes, emergency medical services, medical research laboratories, offices of physicians, dentists, veterinarians, home health care and morgues or funeral homes.

Examples of waste include discarded blood, sharps, unwanted microbiological cultures and stocks, identifiable body parts, human or animal tissue, used bandages and dressings, discarded

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gloves, other medical supplies that may have been in contact with blood and body fluids, and laboratory waste that exhibits the characteristics described above. Waste sharps include potentially contaminated used needles, scalpels, lancets and other devices capable of penetrating skin.

## II. DUMPING MEDICAL WASTE IN TAMILNADU

It's very common to see huge piles of waste as one passes through areas in **Tirunelveli, Theni and Coimbatore** districts in Tamil Nadu. These districts have been visibly affected by the dumping of medical waste from Kerala for few years and its continuing.

In 2012, hospital waste from Kerala was found dumped along the roadside at Othakadai in **Udayankulam**.<sup>3</sup> In October 2016, 23 trucks coming from Kerala that were filled with plastic, electronic and medical wastes are try to dumped indiscriminately on a vacant farmland in **Coimbatore district** (bordering Palakkad) that was seized by people living in the area and environmental activists. Local police registered a case against four persons including the land owner and arrested the agent from Kerala who had taken the land on lease.<sup>4</sup> In November 2018, seized 27 trucks carrying hazardous hospital and plastic waste from Kerala meant for dumping in **Tirunelveli district**. Local residents said that dumping of medical and hospital wastes generated in Kerala has become a major nuisance in Tirunelveli and surrounding areas. In 2021, Anaimalai police registered a case against seven persons in connection with the dumping of medical waste from Kerala in a village near **Pollachi**. Police took action after a group of villagers from **Marappagoundanur** near Anaimalai detained three trucks that were carrying medical waste from Kerala to dump there. Police booked seven Kerala natives, including the landowner, under the Sections 270 (Malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and 278 (Making atmosphere noxious to health) of the IPC and Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act for their alleged illegal dumping of medical waste within the Tamil Nadu border.<sup>5</sup>

These are the few illegal dumping of BMW in Tamilnadu but it is not enough to say, still many of our districts polluted by this illegal dumping. From this piece of information itself we may understand how they using our state as dumping yard for their medical waste. They took lease

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<sup>3</sup> Vehicles trying to dump waste in Tamil Nadu seized, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Coimbatore/vehicles-trying-to-dump-waste-in-tamil-nadu-seized/article3451432.ece>

<sup>4</sup> Priyanka Thirumurthy, Medical waste from Kerala continues to be dumped in TN: Why authorities are worried, <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/medical-waste-kerala-continues-be-dumped-tn-why-authorities-are-worried-92377>

<sup>5</sup> Seven Kerala natives booked for trying to dump medical waste in TN, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/state/tamil-nadu/2021/apr/09/seven-kerala-natives-booked-for-trying-to-dump-medical-waste-in-tn-2288069.html>

or bought land in village near border of Tamilnadu to dump the waste for that they use private transport to carry the waste from Kerala to Tamilnadu. In some case, the BMW are dumped in open space on the way like near liver, high ways roadside, forest and more. It is fully illegal and violation of bio medical waste management rules. As per the rule, the biomedical waste should be disposed off at the nearest waste treatment facility within 48 hours but they illegal way to dispose their waste.

Many cases are registered and trial in court some punishments and fine also executed but also it's not come to the end. More activist work for it for example pugalvendhan, a social activist raise complaint and he had filed an RTI to the Central Pollution Control Board, seeking action taken based on his complaints to previous instances of dumping of biomedical waste. However, he got replies which were irrelevant to his complaint and of some other locations. "They did not give an accurate reply but gave a reply for some other location. Channels and social media create debates relates the issues and many news papers and articles also published on the time though this illegal dumping continue side by side in many areas.

#### **(A) Activist point of view**

Social activists in Kerala blamed the State government and the local bodies for their failure in establishing waste management system. "Kerala, which is described as God's Own Country has become Devils Own Hell. Residents dump their household waste in nearby alleys without bothering about the inconvenience it causes to others," said M S Giri, writer and social activist based at Thiruvananthapuram. Grassroots activists told that they have been demanding that Kerala should set up sufficient waste management facilities instead of dumping waste in the neighbouring state. Pughalvendhan an activist says that every time he raises a complaint with TNPCB or the Drug Control Board, the local municipality authorities just clear the waste. "No action is being taken on offender. Only if action is taken, these crimes will stop," he said.<sup>6</sup>

Some activist says this illegal dumping is not happened without knowledge of some officials in both the state , they question that how private transport enter in the state which carry bio medical waste without checking and how many times this negligence will occur. Respective authorities should take responsible and act against this illegal action. Some land owners also allow filling the waste in their land for money.

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<sup>6</sup> Omjasvin MD, Biomedical waste dumped again in open near Chennai suburbs at Poonamalle, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2021/jan/17/biomedical-waste-dumped-again-in-open-near-chennai-suburbs-at-poonamalle-2251317.html>

### **III. VIOLATION OF BIO MEDICAL WASTE MANAGEMENT RULE IN TAMILNADU**

A conservancy worker was on regular duty of collecting garbage in chrompet. Just as he was handling some household waste collected from a clinic in the locality, a syringe pricked his finger. Then he reported it to his head and the doctor from the clinic was warned. They were asked to dispose of bio-medical waste according to the rules, the worker said. However, this is not a one-off incident in Chennai. Places such as Injambakkam, Thiruneermalai, Chembarambakkam, Anakaputhur, Kundrathur, Vandalur and Nazarethpet are a few of the sites where medical waste is dumped regularly in brazen defiance of rules. Under the Walajabad flyover, along the service road, close to ten sacks of used gloves were spotted by locals in the area. Even though about a dozen instances of medical waste are dumped in public places, have been reported this year 2019, only two cases have been registered by the Tamil Nadu Drugs Control Department, said officials. The most used spots where bio-medical waste is dumped – usually around water bodies and landfills. Bio-medical waste found for the fourth consecutive time near the suburban Mannivakkam Lake, Vandalur. Surgical gloves, syringes, blood-smearred cotton and expired medicines are among the waste discarded. This medicine also has chances to reuse in market.

Two private hospitals were slammed by greater Chennai Corporation for dumping medical waste in the corporation bins. The civic body issued notices to the facilities and imposed a fine of 17 lakh. As per various media accounts, that claimed that a hospital dumped, medical and solid waste on the Avvai Shamugham Salai in Teynampet Zones. Action upon the information, the TNPCB issued notices to Apollo hospital on Greams Road and on Meenakshi Hospital. These are few instance of worst handling and violation of rules in Tamilnadu.

These are few instance only, they use many illegal way to dispose the BMW waste like dumping as landfills, near water bodies and burn in open area which cause environment pollution and danger for people. Doctors are treated like next god but they also involved in such kind of illegal activities is a shocking truth.

#### **(A) Bio Medical Waste Progressing in COVID**

In this COVID pandemic how hospitalities is increasing simultaneously medical waste also increasing. According to TNPCB (Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board), nearly 47 tonnes of medical waste are produced every day but the facilities in the 11 CBMWTF (Common Bio-Medical Waste Treatment Facilities) are restricted to handling only up to 34 tonnes of waste. The current facility in Chennai can only handle up to 25% of the total medical waste generated every day. The remaining of the medical waste are not disposed of properly and are usually

dumped as landfill without any proper precautions and the mixing of these medical waste with the municipal solid waste has become a routine in the recent times.<sup>7</sup> Not only in Tamilnadu our entire country also facing this issue. This data exclude from medical waste from COVID 19 quarantine centres and homes. This also should be supervised and sent to treatment facilities in the same manner medical waste from hospitals, clinics and labs. In the current COVID-19 situation, it is important that these incinerators are able to burn the waste at the prescribed temperature and emit smoke through 30 metre exhaust pipes. In this pandemic we are not only facing lack of treatment facility and also disposing of medical waste of COVID. Average data says a hospital with 100 beds is likely to generate around 100 tonnes of BMW per day, now you imagine the current situation in our state and how much waste we produce. This clearly proves that our state need more caution in BMW management.

### **(B) Causes of Improper Segregation and Disposal of BMW**

Improper segregation and disposal of biomedical waste has the potential to contaminate groundwater sources, which in turn may infect humans and animals alike. From a hospital's waste and storage receptacles to landfills, biomedical waste needs to be properly contained to keep it away from birds, rodents, and stray animals (as well as humans). This enhances packaging and labelling of contaminants and helps prevent the spread of illness through human and animal populations – by air, land, or water.

If not properly contained, segregated, and incinerated through on-site or off-site incineration, environmental hazards associated with improper healthcare waste management can contaminate the air we breathe through dangerous airborne particles. Radioactive particles produced with diagnostic technologies have the potential to reach a landfill or other areas of the environment, especially air. Air pollutants disseminated over huge areas of inhabited land have the potential to trigger a number of illnesses.<sup>8</sup>

Medical Waste materials from laboratories where research was conducted on infectious diseases or those from hospital wards that treated patients with contagious diseases, if dumped without proper disposal near habitations, can get mixed with the water supply sources and may spread to others. Improper disposal of BMW contaminate groundwater, increase radioactivity, it also affect wildlife because it contain infectious agents, toxic and hazardous chemical and sharp objects. Proper segregation and disposal of BMW is important to product our environment and

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<sup>7</sup> T.K. ROHIT, Chennai-based environmental group seeks more norms for disposal of COVID-19 medical waste in Tamil Nadu <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/chennai-based-environmental-group-seeks-more-norms-for-disposal-of-covid-19-medical-waste-in-tamil-nadu/article31739355.ece>

<sup>8</sup> Megan Chamberlain, Effects of Biomedical Waste on the Environment, <https://www.danielshealth.com/knowledge-center/effects-biomedical-waste>

people from this hazard.

#### **IV. RULES AND REALITY**

The Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2016, state that the bio-medical waste generator (healthcare facilities) and the operator of CBMWTF shall be responsible for safe handling and disposal of bio-medical waste in any area. It enlists several rules for safe disposal mechanism of hazardous waste. The licensed healthcare facilities are required to segregate the waste and sign up with the CBMWTF for the collection, transport, treatment and scientific disposal of biomedical waste. The approval for biomedical waste disposal is given by Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB). But in Tamilnadu surgical gloves, syringes, blood-smeared cotton and expired medicines are found discarded indiscriminately around the water bodies and landfills.

The State Health Department should ensure implementation of the rule in all healthcare facilities or occupiers. TNPCB is vested with the responsibility to monitor the compliance of various provisions and conditions. Further, the TNPCB is mandated to take action against healthcare facilities or common bio-medical waste treatment facilities that violate segregation rules. But there is lack of effective implementation has led to rampant illegalities in the methods of disposal of the bio-medical waste.

According to the Biomedical Waste Management Rule, 2016, there should be at least one CBMWTF located within the respective state or union territory to cater to healthcare units situated at a radial distance of 75 km. However, in a coverage area, where there are less than 10,000 beds within a radial distance of 75 km, the existing CBMWTF in the locality may also be allowed to cater to the healthcare units situated within a radius of 150 km of its location, provided the biomedical waste generated is collected, treated and disposed of within 48 hours as stipulated under the rules.

In Tamil Nadu, there are 11 treatment centres and two among them cater to Chennai and nearby districts. Two treatment facilities for three districts that house around 1,100 hospitals and clinics do not meet the demands. So definitely our state should increase treatment facilities in our state to avoid illegal dumping of waste. Comparing Tamilnadu with other Indian states such as Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala have more than 20 centres.

The expert strongly advocates using sustainable alternatives: “Although it may not be possible to substitute these completely with eco-friendly products, it is essential to choose the available ones that have lower carbon footprint.” For instance, plastic syringes can be replaced with steel

syringes (needles can be discarded) and plastic casts with bio-degradable wooden ones.<sup>9</sup>

Rules should be following strictly and authorities have to take actions against violator immediately. Our government also have to think about provide more facilities and alternative options for dispose of bio medical waste. In current situation it is needy one for our state because COVID cases are increasing for day by day at the same medical waste also increasing side by side so our TNPCB should fine solution for this as soon as possible.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this pandemic, COVID teach many things which includes we have poor management of disposing of BMW and we have to improve it. That is a reason now we are struggling to dispose tonnes and tonnes of bio waste. Most medial field bodies find illegal way to dispose their waste. Many private hospitals and clinic also violate the rules. This illegal activity is done by responsible persons like doctors, clinics, hospital, laboratories and pharmacies is practical truth. They should follow the Bio Medical Waste Management Rules for disposing the waste and also behave with some social responsibility if it is violated by anyone respective authorities should take action immediately and punishment should be executed as soon as possible. We things about hospital hygiene, quality of treatments and hospital management but not about another side of their Bio Waste how they dispose and handle these waste because of this lacking of thought only violation are happen and neighbour state also dumping their waste in our state. The TamilNadu Pollution Control Board should follow up disposal and segregation of Bio Waste regularly which help to control these illegal activities. This environment is not only for human it is also for all living things and future generation so it our duty to product environment for pollution. With some base analysis of facts and overview which helps you to understand the seriousness of issue and importance of Bio-medical Waste Management Rules.

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<sup>9</sup> Bhavani Prabhakar, Syringes, casts by the waterfront: Chennai flouts biomedical waste disposal rules, <https://chennai.citizenmatters.in/incinerators-to-come-up-soon-to-handle-bio-med-wastes-in-chennai-gcc-14518>