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Corporation in the dock for poor waste management

No let-up in dengue cases; waste continues to pile up in different places in city

With no let-up in dengue cases reported from the city, the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation continues to find itself in the dock over a delayed start to pre-monsoon sanitation and clean-up activities to control the mosquito population.

The civic body's much-touted waste management at source is at the heart of the debate, with critics alleging that it has not yielded the desired results.

Says Karamana councillor Ajith, "From pipe-composting to kitchen bins to aerobic bins, nothing has worked effectively. Crores of rupees have been spent on these projects. A Vigilance investigation should be ordered to find out what has happened to this money."

The Thumboormuzhi-model aerobic bins are functioning properly in only a few locations, such as Jagathy and Erumakuzhy. In Karamana, the councillor has asked the

Mayor to remove the bins in the absence of proper upkeep and waste being dumped all around the spot.

Despite the Corporation's claims of clean-up activities being apace, drains and channels by roadsides continue to be dumped with waste, some of it in plastic covers. Piles of waste lie accumulated in bylanes. Roadsides are dotted with plants and thickets, construction material, debris, old furniture, abandoned vehicles, and waste from roadside shacks, providing a breeding ground for vectors.

“Waste, including slaughter waste, is dumped in open spaces. For instance, on either side of the Kalady-Attukal road,” says autorickshaw driver Satheesh Kumar, a resident of Kalady. “On the Killipalam Bund road, local people keep watch to prevent people from throwing waste there. They have even installed CCTV cameras there,” he says.

Says Chala councillor SKP Ramesh, “Waste from a number of wards, including Chala, is collected by an agency and sent to Tamil Nadu. What the city Corporation was supposed to do is being done by someone else. There are mounds of waste still

on the Corporation's land at Erumakuzhy.”

The Corporation has asked wards to find landfills to dump the waste cleared by it, but this too has drawn flak. Says Sheeba Patrick, Valiathura councillor, “If we had that much land, we would have shifted families affected by the raging sea there long ago.”

The Corporation claims to have cleared 130 loads of waste, but only two or three trucks are functional, the rest have broken down, Mr. Ramesh says. Mayor V.K. Prasanth says things are not as bad as they are made out to be. “We are not doing too badly considering there is no centralised waste treatment plant. We have managed to remove nearly 30 dump sites. That is an achievement. With the implementation of green protocol and the plastic ban, the daily waste generated in the city has come down from 450 tonnes to 200 tonnes,” he says. The Mayor says the next Council meeting will decide on intensifying waste management activities.

Mr. Prasanth says talks are also on with the Suchitwa Mission on a mechanism for collection and disposal of sanitary napkins by considering it as biomedical waste.

