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New waste landfill to address Trichy's solid waste issues

TRICHY: The recent fire at the Ariyamangalam composite dump yard here has forced the authorities to come up with a viable solution to the issues plaguing the five-decade-old site. Now, a part of the sprawling 47-acre yard on the Trichy-Thanjavur road will have a scientifically developed waste landfill.

"This year's fire was indeed a blessing in disguise," Trichy Municipal Corporation (TMC) commissioner V P Dhandapani said referring to the plan to develop a landfill site. A day after the fire broke and smoke engulfed the nearby areas, the chief executive officer of a Bangalore-based private company, which will study and identify the landfill sites for seven cities in Tamil Nadu, including Trichy, visited Trichy. A bio-reactor would be set up on a war footing under the regional processing and landfill project of the Tamil Nadu government. "A 50x100m pit with a depth of five to seven meters would be made and this would be able to absorb eight months of solid waste at the rate of 200 MTs a day," said Dhandapani. Methane gas that will be generated out of the landfill could either be tapped scientifically or left to leave, depending upon the infrastructure.

Currently, a private company recycles around 100 MTs of solid waste at the Ariyamangalam site. TMC also plans to set up a

plant of its own to process 500 MTs of waste. Trichy city, which is four km from the yard, generates around 350 MTs of solid waste, never had a solid waste management programme. TMC, which allowed the dumping of waste at the Ariyamangalam composite yard all these years, didn't foresee the problems that accumulated solid waste a growing city can pose. "Every summer, fire would break out without fail at the dump yard, and fire tenders would be summoned to put them out," said a long-serving TMC official who refused to be named. Ironically, burning piles of trash was TMC's own idea of doing away them, thus posing environmental and health hazards.

But a question remained as to what do with the existing huge pile of garbage that has accumulated at the Ariyamangalam yard? "The entire waste would now be vertically brought within 20 acres for "scientific bio-capping." Care must be taken so that rain water does not seep in, and surveillance at the site will be implemented for avoiding 'man-made causes of fire,'" Dhandapani said. To process the current quantity of waste generated in Trichy daily, seven acres is enough. So, the civic body will have extra land for other purposes.