



ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The primary responsibility of media is backing democratic procedures. Under this definition the responsibility of Mass Media in waste management can be identified as a straightforward obligation, since the waste management is a legal duty of local governments because the local governments are the bridge between the State and voters. Official sources confirm that about 40% of waste generated is being incinerated within the households. The practice is not in congruence to the widely known 4R principles namely Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover that has been advocated by the National Policy of Solid Waste Management. It has been further revealed that Local Governments are now heading for high temperature burning vis-à-vis applying 4R principles. Under these circumstances, the present study is to identify the responsibility and the influence of mass media on solid waste management. The methodology of the study was monitoring two national newspapers and a national television channel for a period of one year, for the key word 'waste' to test whether sample medium has been capable to abide by their major functions, delivering information and education vis-à-vis other specific functions such as entertainment etc., using the allocated prime-time/prime-space for 'waste' as the major indicator. The results show that the contribution of media has been limited to reporting the problem and not extended to the investigative type of journalism that the modern democracy is demanding. This classical behavior can be attributed to the fact that media survival is due to advertising spent by commercial elites, including the State and private intermediates of waste management. The paper discusses whether under the present market driven conditions, the traditional mass media can be considered as a credible stakeholder in waste management practices and concludes with recommendation to switch to the social Medium as an alternative in order to promote 4R principles as waste management standard.

Keywords: Waste Management; Mass Media, Social responsibility, Media Ethics