

## **The garbage politics**

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Every activity of human produces solid waste. This is creating a big environmental problem. It aggravates the environmental condition of most urban areas of Nepal. Solid waste is not only a jumble of garbage and refuse; it's also a source of valuable materials. Most countries are sorting and utilizing papers, aluminium and tin cans, glass and plastics and even organic materials leaving almost nothing to be called waste. But in Nepal, whatever is thrown from a first user is dumped and haphazard dumping is becoming not only technical problem but also a political one.

Gokarna can be considered the first dumping site of Nepal. People of Kathmandu produce 292500 kg of waste per day and the management of it is under the task of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. KMC is also adopting the concept of Separate collection, Sort and Sell (3S) but incapable to incorporate all the waste produced. The throw out behaviour of people is making mess of all the wastes in the streets. Sometimes the street mess is not collected or managed for weeks due to crises of dumping field. As a result, frequent fowl smell of whole city is common and it's the example of mismanagement, ineffectiveness, and irresponsibility of the concern authorities. None of the concern authority is taking this seriously. But a few people play a nasty game with waste who are directly or indirectly influenced by political leaders. Usually politicians don't play games but in Nepal, they are playing the game of garbage politics.

Since 1990, garbage has been a game among politicians who look for publicity. They raise to gain popularity. They didn't know whether the solid waste management is a technical problem or a political one. That's why even the management of solid waste has technically been a challenge for managers, environmentalists, and policy makers. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been a problem to dump at Gokarna for some years and for the long run Syuchatar or Okharpauwa would have used. Now, even the technicians who gave up this hope are advising to dump garbage at the bank of rivers which is inadvisable in other countries. Los Angeles City Council has prohibited the dumping of market refuse and rubbish in the riverbed since August 1910. This shows our solid waste management system is 90 years behind America system. To dispose or allow or permit disposal of solid waste at a place which is not an approved solid waste site, on other public or private property is considered as illegal dumping in America.

But in Nepal, the government is permitting and disposing in these areas so it cannot be stated whether it's legal or illegal as there are no rules in this respect. Anyway, this type of dumping can cause a serious problem because it poses a threat to the health and safety of the public and the environment because birds, rodents, insects, and other vermin are attracted to dumping sites and it provides breeding ground for mosquitoes, which can multiply 100 times faster than normal.

Dumping at the bank of river is the worst decision made by the government. Environmental Conservation Regulations, 2054 has clearly mentioned about the need of EIA study before dumping which has not done yet to know positive and negative impacts of dumping at the bank of the Bagmati river. So, it's against the environmental laws of Nepal. It will not be managed properly which can be generalized from previous cases. Even if road is constructed above the dumping area, that wouldn't help to improve the environmental condition nor would it last long. Road construction is also done in other countries but we shouldn't forget that the materials dumped there and here are different. Organic or decomposable materials are the main constituents in our waste and in other countries, the wastes from construction and demolition materials like rock, brick, concrete, asphalt, dirt, ceramic tile, and other similar materials are used. Therefore, the demolition or sinking of road will occur after the decomposition of waste in one hand and the leachate will definitely help further pollution of Bagmati. Once the riverbank loses its beauty it will be very expensive and difficult to recover. According to Veronica Odriozola, Green peace Campaigner, "It is possible to stop polluting rivers, but political will is required".

The disaster could occur anytime by the collision of birds flying above the waste site and aeroplanes flying in the international airport since the distance of current waste site is less than 200 meters. Some accidents were already experienced in the sky of Kathmandu while the dumping site was even farther than the present site.

To improve the management of solid waste, improvement in collection, transportation, processing, and disposal services is a must. There should be separate collection system for wastes because it is almost impossible to reuse and recycle from mixed wastes. Individuals have to think about the waste they produce and they must reduce the amount of waste then separate it for reuse and recycling processes. To prevent pollution, we have to find someone who may reuse or recycle the waste and this is being done in Kathmandu by scavengers and scrappers in a small scale and have to be promoted. The most effective way of managing waste is not to create it in the first place instead of worrying about its reuse, recycle, and seek for the alternatives. For example, instead of using new plastic bag, take your own bag during shopping.

Public participation is necessary to gather evidence in order to stop illegal dumping. Managers need full public participation in the implementation of reduce, reuse, and recycle plan with its goals of landfill abatement, coordination of waste management, and energy recovery. Unless and until politicians stop playing with waste, the problem of solid waste in Nepal will not be solved. They should just let the technicians do their job in their way and follow strictly or privatize the solid waste management system and see how 3S will generate billions of rupees from the same waste, which is hassling the government at present.

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