



Light up with

TRASH

Trash is generated, not in heaps but in tonnes, to use a figurative way of speak. With increasing population and changing lifestyles, municipal solid waste or MSW, is increasing phenomenally. In poorer countries, the most common way seems to burn it. But the gases released during burning are pollutants. If waste is not managed efficiently, we humans are likely to be smothered in the waste we generate. A World Bank report estimates that by 2025 there will be 1.4 billion more people living in cities worldwide, with each person producing an average of 1.42 kg of MSW per day.

All the waste that is thrown, lands somewhere – as pollutants in the air affecting the air we breathe, plastic waste choking marine life in the oceans and polluting rivers. Several countries in the world do not have a structured waste collection and treatment process. They are simply dumped in non-scientific landfills or in illegal dumping grounds. Some cities

dump their waste in water bodies. Since, scientific processing/treatment, methods call for requirement of land, for many local bodies, burning the trash comes as an easy option. Combustion reduces the volume of material by about 90 percent and its weight by 75 percent but also increases the hazards of air pollution.

There is indeed a strong case for managing waste in a technically sound and economically rational process. Waste management is a technology process that has a cost-benefit equation. In poorer countries, rag picking personnel make a living out of sorting MSW. But smarter MSW management techniques can throw up alternative opportunities.

MSW to MWe

Several high income countries have put effective waste management practices in place. According to a World Bank Report, urban waste worldwide is expected to touch 2.2 billion tonnes per year. This is tonnes of waste, literally wasted. Waste to energy or WTE, is a workable solution that has a long term perspective.