CHAPTER 10

URBAN ORGANIC SOLID WASTE: PRACTICES IN HYDERABAD

10.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses specifically on the way that organic waste moves through the solid waste management system in Hyderabad. The activities are examined in the light of the possible contributions that can be made to a more sustainable development of the system. The management of organic solid waste in terms of collection, transportation, treatment and ultimate disposal is posing a serious challenge to local governments in India, where a large proportion of waste remains organic (see chapter 3). Although dumping at disposal sites is still done in Hyderabad, urban administrations in India are increasingly looking for other ways to dispose of organic waste, as land is scarce near cities and the costs of transporting waste over long distances are prohibitive. This is reflected, for instance, in the yearly meetings organised by the Urban Think Tank in India, for local authorities in India and the region, of which the 1999 meeting was on SWM.

Recovering organic waste for composting is recognized as an important strategy for reducing waste flows, although this premise is not yet widely reflected in the activities of local authorities in Hyderabad (UNEP, 2001). Source separation of organic materials would enhance the quality of organic waste for such recovery activities and make them economically feasible, which is presently not the case in India (UNEP, 2001). In the literature, waste reduction activities refer to diverting post-consumption residues from final disposal at the local level by separation and composting of uncontaminated organic material. For municipal waste, households would have to segregate the waste at source. This also means that urban administrations would have to encourage source separation of ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ wastes by households for the reuse of organic wastes. This demands greater community awareness and participation in solid waste manage-

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ment. Non-governmental organisations could provide the necessary education regarding people’s participation in solid waste management. The services of waste pickers and itinerant buyers can be utilized, especially if they can handle uncontaminated source separated solid waste (Baud and Schenk, 1994; and Furedy, 1997 a).

This chapter examines the extent to which the activities recognized in the literature as being important for organic reuse, actually occur in Hyderabad.

10.2. ORGANIC WASTE

In chapter 3, the waste generated in Hyderabad and its changing composition is discussed. Very little information on the composition of the waste exists, and what there is, is usually based on estimates of a general nature. A study of waste characteristics in 1997 suggests that about 55 percent of the waste at three dumpsites in Hyderabad was compostable matter (Save Systems, 1997).3

There are two categories of main generators of organic waste in Hyderabad. The first are the bulk waste generators of organic waste (both mixed and one type of organic waste). These include stables, dairy farms, hotels, restaurants, hostels, function halls, markets, and slaughterhouses. The second are the continuous generators of small amounts of organic waste mixed with other waste, mainly consisting of households.

The market for organic waste is quite varied, and is shown in Figure 10.1. Waste from bulk waste generators goes into the municipal waste stream as well as into private sector channels for reuse. Dung from dairy farms and stables is collected by private trucks and is transported directly to farmers Waste from hotels and restaurants is collected by herdsmen, employees and Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad (MCH) truck crews (see also chapter 3). The food waste collected by herdsmen is used as fodder for cattle, and is also used to feed pigs, poultry, goats and sheep. Employees and municipal crews throw the waste into dustbins from which it goes into the transportation and disposal channels by MCH and private contractors Market waste is transported mainly by MCH workers; a small part of it goes on for vermicomposting.4 Organic waste from slaughterhouses is collected by MCH workers, and goes through the usual municipal channels to the dumpsites.

3. The garbage examined was collected from Gandamguda, Golconda and Autonagar dumpsites. It was collected every day (5 samples) for one week in the period of August (rainy season). The figures were on wet basis, with moisture levels of 55-60 percent.

4. The project originally started as a pilot, but in 2001 was working on a larger scale, after recovering from a fire which stopped work for several months. According to recent information it had 15 beds for composting, able to handle 90 trucks of waste. Organic waste is combined with neem oil cake and cow dung to make it more useful (Dhanalakshmi, 2002).