

# Community Views and Attitudes for Waste Management Improvement in a Higher Education Institute: A Case Study

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The safe disposal technologies for waste is utmost important for the reduction of environmental burdens associated with the improper disposal of wastes. Before the planning and implementation of waste management systems, the views and attitudes of community (stakeholders) are very important for the sustainability of waste management system which will be implemented. In this study, we attempted to gather the views of community in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna on environmental issues and waste management, and evaluate them for the improvement of waste management system towards sustainability. A questionnaire survey and informal discussions were carried out to gather information on waste management. A randomly selected sample was taken, covering all possible members such as academic staff, non academic staff, students and cleaning service personnel comprising the sample size of 70 were interviewed. Informal discussions were also conducted with the individuals (randomly) in the Faculty. Gathered data were analyzed through simple descriptive methods using Microsoft spread sheet software. The most of the respondents (96 %) knows that environmental degradation is a serious problem due to improper disposal of solid wastes. However, about 63 % of respondents think that equal priorities should be given for the development activities and environmental issues. About 50 % of respondents believe that health problems are created due to environmental deterioration and over 74% argued that respiratory problems are apparent due to improper disposal of wastes. Over 90 % of people know the waste management system practiced in the faculty and there demerits. For the good management of wastes, the segregation is essential; however, most of the respondents think that waste separation is not important for waste management. Therefore, it is necessary make an awareness program for them to get involved in the waste separation. Eighty nine percent of people like to support and cooperate in the activities of the waste management programs implemented at the faculty. And also they (69%) know the cooperation is essential for the management of wastes. Most of the community interviewed think that a good waste management system can be implemented at the faculty and they believe that education, technology, man power and resources are abundant in the faculty. The people in the faculty like to cooperate and participate for a proper waste management system. Therefore, their involvement should be encouraged for the development and implementation of waste management system in the faculty. The views and attitudes of the stake holders are very important for the proper function of waste management systems in any institute and therefore, prior to the implementation of waste management system, stakeholders' views should be taken and their attitudes should also be changed where necessary.

Keywords: Waste management, Composting, Waste disposal