



Healthcare Facilities flouting bio medical waste management rules in Gujarat

Most of the Hospitals visited in Gujarat did not have an Effluent Treatment Plant to treat liquid biomedical waste.

Ahmedabad, July 15th 2021: Government, private hospitals and clinics in Gujarat are flouting the biomedical waste rules and increasing the risk of infection for the common public, says a new study by Toxics Link, a Delhi-based environmental group. The findings from the report titled **'DON'T DUMP THAT'**, assesses the current status of hospital waste management in four major districts of Gujarat- Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Gandhinagar and Sabarkantha.

The study, which collected data on biomedical waste management practices pre-COVID from 145 healthcare facilities from these four districts, including government & private hospitals and small clinics, found that the segregation practices were not proper in many of the facilities. Most of the facilities visited had not installed an effluent treatment plant and many of them were not even connected to tertiary effluent treatment plants and were releasing liquid waste directly into the sewage system. Many hospitals were also not pre-treating their laboratory waste which is required as per the Rules. Since, most of the healthcare facilities are operating without adhering to the norms of the BMW, 2016 rules, it raises a question on the quality of monitoring mechanisms being adopted in the state.

The study done by Toxics Link, in collaboration with Ahmedabad-based NGO, Paryavaran Mitra, found serious gaps on ground. "We found bags filled with waste lying unattended in some of the hospital premises", shared Mr. Mahesh Pandya, Paryavaran Mitra. The study found the condition of the waste storage areas in most hospitals poor and violating the norms laid by the 2016 Rules.

The study report has also highlighted the concerns related to functioning of CBWTFs, as there have been several reports earlier of the violations by some of them.

Serious Gaps

Shockingly, the Toxics Link- Paryavaran Mitra study reports that 13% of the facilities surveyed had not even tied up with the CBWTF, a condition without which they are not allowed to operate under the Rules. In another grave violation, 27% of the surveyed facilities are mixing their biomedical waste with municipal waste, while 15% facilities are disposing of their hazardous waste along with BMW. This not only violates the law but also leads to increased infectious waste volumes as well as release of toxic products into the environment.

The study also found that most healthcare facilities including clinics, pay no attention to occupational health & safety of the healthcare staff, as activities like needle recapping were prevalent in 87% of the facilities and around 90% lack any policy for post exposure prophylaxis. Absence of needle cutters from important points in hospitals is a serious concern and may result in needle stick injuries and also needle reuse. Needle injuries have been globally identified as one of the key reasons for the spread of infectious diseases like Hepatitis and HIV among health care staff.



Mr. Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link, cautioned, “The biomedical waste management rules in Gujarat are not being implemented on ground by most healthcare facilities specially the small clinics. Regulatory agencies need to strengthen the system and take legal action against healthcare facilities not following proper norms and also closely monitor the CBWTFs.”

Some key findings

- Most HCFs do not have their own websites, which is mandatory under the new Rules
- Most HCFs have not uploaded their annual report on their website, mandatory under the new Rules.
- Biomedical waste generation records highlight improper reporting and mixing of general waste with biomedical waste.
- Poor infrastructure in the storage areas, basic requirements not met.
- 13% facilities visited under the study not connected to CBWTFs
- 27% facilities disposing municipal solid waste along with biomedical waste
- 15% facilities disposing hazardous waste along with biomedical waste
- Filled waste bags lying unattended in the hospital premises
- 19% facilities not pre-treating their microbiological waste/lab waste
- Most facilities lack pre-treatment equipment like microwave/ autoclave
- None of the hospitals have installed effluent treatment plant
- Recapping of needle, a frequent activity seen in 87% HCFs and in 100% clinics
- Lack of policy for Post Exposure Prophylaxis
- IEC material not placed at strategic locations
- Case study and existing reports show appalling conditions of CBWTFs

For Report: <http://toxicslink.org/docs/BMW%20%20-%20Gujarat%20Report.pdf>

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