

## ITC to turn waste into wealth across the country

India's multi-business conglomerate ITC Limited plans to take its 'Wealth Out of Waste' (WOW) programme across the country, encouraged by its success in Hyderabad, [Chennai](#) and Coimbatore, as also in this IT capital, a company official said.

WOW has been designed to manage waste from individual households as well as civic bodies. It discourages recyclable waste from going into landfills or getting burnt - both of which damage the environment, said Chand Das, chief executive of ITC's education and stationery products business.

ITC will collect dry recyclable waste from households for which the company will supply two coloured bags - blue for plastics and metal waste and white for paper waste.

To encourage people to participate in the programme, ITC will pay Rs.5 for a blue bag and Rs.4.50 for white bag full of recyclable wastes, Das told IANS.

'We have just started waste management programmes under WOW in parts of Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Coimbatore on an experimental basis. We are happy with our initial success and plan to spread it across the country,' Das said.

'Through our initiative, we want to contribute to the cause of the environment by proper segregation and recycling of waste products,' he added.

A recent study by ITC showed that on an average, an Indian city generates around 2,500 tonnes of waste every day. Since there is hardly any recycling, the waste is used as landfill, causing large scale air and water pollution, the study says.

'Recycling of waste has huge benefits and can save a lot of our natural heritage,' said Das.

'Recycling of one tonne of waste paper saves 17 trees and 7,000 gallons of water. This is just an example of the benefits of recycling,' he maintained.

A number of school teachers in India's IT hub attended a seminar here on WOW that was addressed by noted environmentalist Ken R. Gnanakan who launched PEAS (Programme for Environmental Awareness in Schools) 15 years ago. Around 100,000 students from 1,000 schools across India are now engaged in various activities to spread awareness about environment-related issues, according to Gnanakan.

'The entire world is talking about global warming and climate change. But all is futile if we don't address the issue of resource and waste management. In waste lies a lot of energy and if we manage it properly, the waste products, instead of polluting the environment, could be harnessed to produce energy in the form of electricity and bio-gas,' said Gnanakan.

Through WoW, ITC claims to deal with various issues like environment protection, reduction of global warming, improving green cover, reducing landfills, improving ground water quality, general health and hygiene, reducing garbage handling costs, better civic amenities and providing cost competitive raw material to industries.

'The idea of inviting school teachers to the seminar was to provide a platform for the teachers' fraternity to help build opinion among the youngsters to take up the issue of waste management in a big way,' Das said.

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