

REGULATORY INTERVENTIONS IN COVID-19 WASTE MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

DEVENDRA K. SONI

Central Pollution Control Board, Regional Directorate (MoEF&CC), Lucknow (U.P.)

ABSTRACT : Availability of safe water, sanitation and hygienic conditions is utmost important for protecting human health during all infectious disease outbreaks, including of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). In late 2019, an acute respiratory disease emerged, as Novel Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has already spread throughout the world due to its fastest-spreading nature. Ensuring evidenced-based and consistently applied waste management practices in communities, homes, schools, market places, hospitals and healthcare facilities will help to prevent human-to-human transmission of the virus. However the pandemic brings challenges regarding municipal waste, Bio-medical waste management practices and procedures. In this regard, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), had issued guidelines in March,2020 and then a revised the same in April, for handling, treatment, and safe disposal of waste generated during treatment, diagnosis and quarantine of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients generated from different sources *i.e.* isolated wards, sample testing pathological labs, quarantine centres and home care quarantine. Although the Bio-medical Waste Management Rules (BMWM), rules 2016 is already in place to take care of general Bio-medical waste generated from different Health Care Facilities (HCFs), the updated guidelines were issued specifically to make sure that the waste generated during testing and treatment of coronavirus patients is scientifically disposed off, given the contagious nature of the virus. The CPCB has also developed the tracking app (mobile and desktop) for tracking of COVID-19 related Bio-medical waste (<https://bwm.cpcbcr.com>) being generated from different potential sources for better management and its disposal for the SPCB, waste generator and CBWTF. This paper will help the health care providers engaged in managing the epidemic and in the management of waste generated during treatment of patients of the highly infectious disease.

Key words : *COVID-19, Bio-medical waste, Tracking app, Bio-medical waste management rules,2016, HCF, CBWTF.*