

CHAPTER 2

THE PROBLEM OF SOLID WASTE AND ITS MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

What do we mean by solid waste?

As per the Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules, 2016 notified by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), solid waste has been defined as follows:

“Solid waste means and includes solid or semi-solid domestic waste, sanitary waste, commercial waste, institutional waste, catering and market waste and other non-residential wastes, street sweeping or silt removed from the surface drain, horticultural waste, agricultural and dairy waste, treated biomedical waste excluding industrial waste, biomedical waste and e-waste, battery waste, radio-active waste generated in the area of local authorities and other entities mentioned in Rule 2.”

Essentially, then, ‘solid waste’ refers to unwanted or useless solid material mainly generated as a result of human activities in residential, industrial and commercial areas, and discarded by the public. It is usually referred to as ‘trash’ or ‘garbage’ in the US and ‘rubbish’ in the UK.

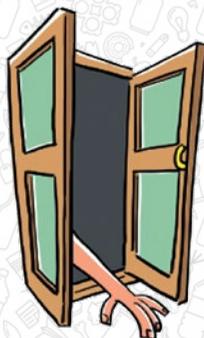


Did You Know?

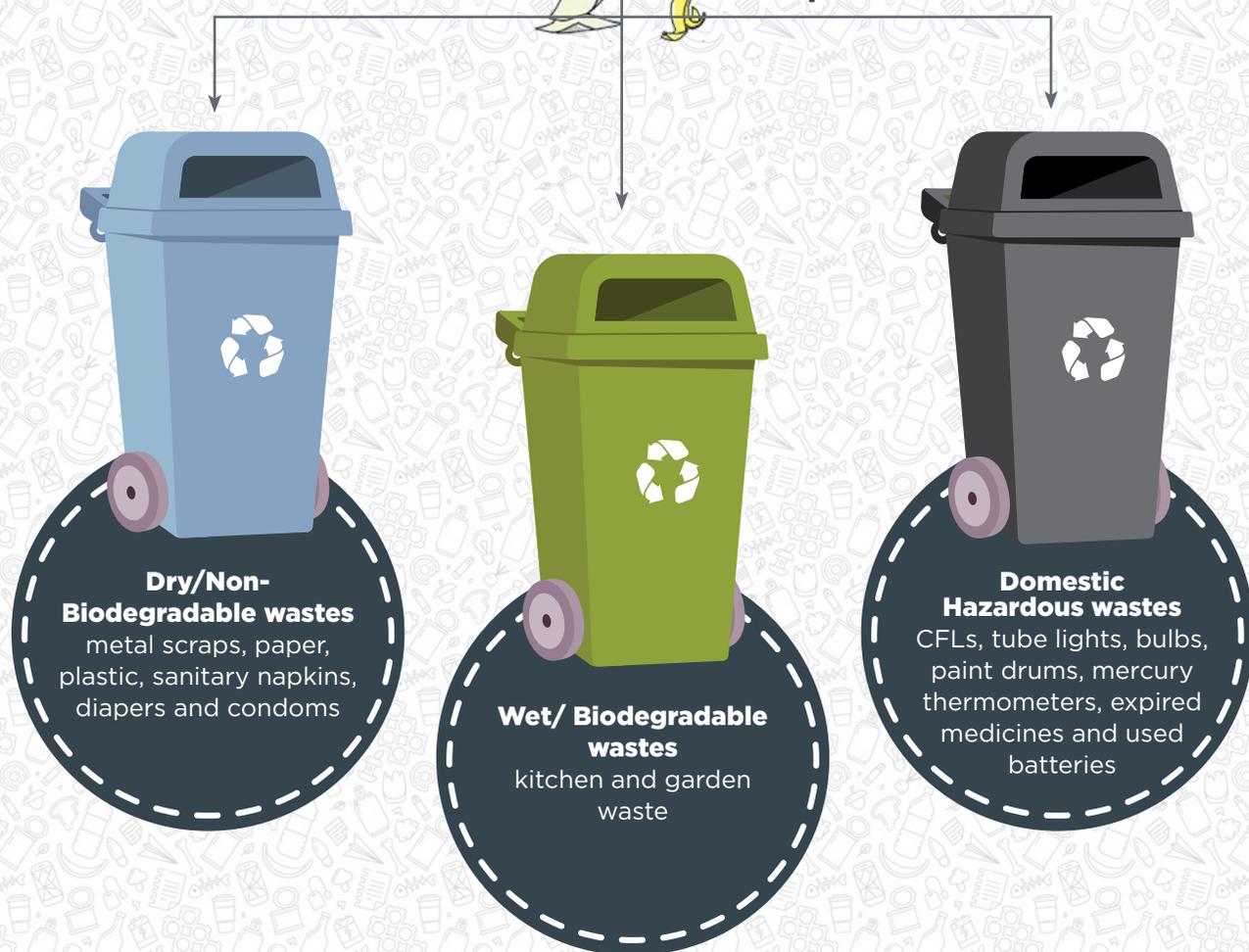
That recycling is not exactly a safe and permanent solution for disposing of plastic waste? While most plastic waste is recyclable, recycled plastic products can prove to be more harmful to the environment as they contain additives and colors. Recycling of virgin plastic material can be done only two-three times because after every recycling, the material deteriorates due to thermal pressure and its life-span is reduced.

What are the different types of solid waste?

The SWM Rules include the following three waste streams into which all types of waste should be segregated.



Municipal waste



Note: The Solid Waste Management Rules 2016 also specify the colour code for disposal bins

- **GREEN** - wet (biodegradable waste)
- **BLUE or WHITE** - dry waste (non-biodegradable, non-hazardous waste)
- **BLACK** - hazardous waste

In addition to the above three categories, the Rules also state that construction and demolition (C&D) waste should be disposed of as and when it is generated in accordance with the Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules, 2016. Similarly, there are separate sets of Rules for management of e-waste and biomedical waste.

For a detailed list of types of solid waste with specific reference to schools, please refer to Chapter 3.