



FOOD WASTAGE: EFFECTS, REDUCTION AND PREVENTION

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Abstract:

Food waste or food loss is food that is discarded or cannot be used. The causes of food waste or loss are numerous. In most of the countries maximum amount of food is wasted at the consumption stage. Social functions are the special spots for food wastage. Food waste deteriorates the healthy environment and lowers the standards of nutritional status of the population. If it is not properly managed it is serious health hazard and leads to the spread of infectious diseases hence there is a very urgent need of reduction and prevention of food waste. Many strategies to reduce and prevent food wastage are discussed. One way of dealing with food waste is to reduce its creation. Consumers can reduce spoilage by planning their food shopping, avoiding wasteful purchases, and storing foods properly. Considering the ill effects of food wastage on health, nutritional status of population, environment and the economy of the nation the need of the hour is to do zero waste. Hence it was concluded that to feed the increasing population of the world zero waste of food at every stage has to be practice by each individual, family and nation as whole.

Keywords: food wastage, ill effects, strategies, reduction, prevention

Introduction:

Globalization, modernization, Urbanization and Progress has made our lives very comfortable. But when we think of the other side of the coin these factors have contributed largely to degrade the environment of our planet by polluting land, air and water. The ever increasing population of the world has ever increasing demands of foods and other all essential things but at the same time there has been a considerable rise in the amount of waste being generated daily by each individual house and industry as well.

Every year around four billion tons of food are produced and around two billion is wasted. A quarter of the wasted food is due to the lack of hygiene. Crops are planted with filthy hands, usually not sprayed with





disease eradicating fungicides. Even more food is wasted during the transportation, where the crops are jammed together in a never cleaned truck. Food retailers reject 42 per cent of the food sold to them because the yield doesn't fit the required amount. There is actually nothing wrong with the food. Finally food is wasted by us, the consumers because we throw away food if we get new food. Thus, food waste or food loss is food that is discarded or cannot be used. The causes of food waste or loss are numerous and occur at the stages of production, processing, retaining and consumption. Pests also play a role in food waste because a swarm of pests such as the locust can devastate months of careful farming and eat all the yield, thus resulting in food shortages. On the way to the stores, crops, usually get filthy and are undesirable products. At the store, no consumer would want to buy them so they are chucked out. Natural calamities like flood, drought, hurricanes and earthquakes can wipe out farms in an instant. They cause diseases to spread like a wild fire . If left unattended ,the food wastage problem could turn into a catastrophe and threaten millions. The food waste has to be manage to prevent health hazards and spread of infectious diseases.

Maximum amount of food wastage takes place in functions like marriages, receptions, parties, get togethers, buffets, bhandaras, mahaprasad etc. It generally happens so because of the mismatch between the amount of food cooked for the number of particular people and the actual number of people consuming it. Here the food which is not consumed is discarded as waste and is dumped in landfills or is fed to animals. As of 2013 half of all food is wasted worldwide, according to the British Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IME). Loss and wastage occurs at all stages of the food supply chain or value chain. In low-income countries most loss occurs during production, while in developed countries much food about 100 kilograms per person per year is wasted at the consumption stage.

Effects of Food Wastage:

- Dumping food waste in a landfill causes odour as it decomposes attracts flies and has potential to add biological oxygen demand to the lechate, where it ends up rotting and producing methane, a green house gas.





- Commercially food waste in the form of waste water coming from commercial kitchen sinks, dishwashers, household kitchens, are often foul smelling and contain both organic and inorganic waste and may also contain hazardous gases.
- When food is wasted it causes food shortages which are called famines. Today the government is facing the acute problem of feeding the ever increasing population of the country. For this it is importing food items from other countries and expending of good amount for it which can other ways be utilized for other developmental cause.

Hence, considering all the above ill-effects of food wastage on environment which directly cause health hazards deteriorating the environmental conditions and contribute in lowering the standard of nutritional status of the population. There is very urgent need of reduction and prevention of food wastage to provide a healthy pollution less environment for everyone of us to live a healthy life.

Reduction and Prevention Strategies:

Response to the problem of food waste at all social levels has varied hugely, including campaigns from advisory and environment groups , and concentrated media attention on the subject.

Food waste source reduction or prevention is the strategy of preventing food waste before it is created. An example of food waste prevention for a buffet is tracking which dishes generally have more leftovers and either make less of the dish or substitute it with a more popular dish, rather than continuing to throw the leftovers away.

- One way of dealing with food waste is to reduce its creation. Consumers can reduce spoilage by planning their food shopping, avoiding potentially wasteful spontaneous purchases, and storing foods properly.
- Do a food waste assessment - The first step to reducing food waste is to measure and track the amount type and reason for its generation.
- Reduce over purchasing of food -Create guidelines or implement a system to ensure that you only purchase what you need and when you need it.
- Reduce prep waste and improperly cooked food.





- Prefer tray less systems with minimum garnishes which is usually discarded.
- Encourage everyone to take only the food they would like to consume.
- Create guidelines and goals to reduce spoilage and waste.
- Ensure that food products are stored under proper conditions.
- Develop a zero food wastage protocol.
- Improve preservation techniques.

Benefits of Reduction and Prevention:

- **Cut down on your disposal costs** - By decreasing the amount of food wasted, business pay less to dispose of their trash.
- **Reduce your over-purchasing and labor costs** - In making strides to prevent food waste, you can reduce costs by purchasing only the food that will be used, or by decreasing improperly prepared foods. Additionally, reducing food waste can increase staff efficiency and reduce energy and labor associated with disposing of food.
- **Reduce resource use associated with food production** - There are many inputs to grow food, including water, fertilizers, pesticides and energy. By wasting food, you are also wasting the resources that went into growing it. Additionally, 14 per cent of greenhouse gases are associated with growing, manufacturing, transporting and disposing of food.
- **Reduce GHG Emissions** - Less food being wasted means less food being composted or land filled food produces methane, a very potent green house gas.
- **Surplus food** – The amount of food being saved from being wasted can be used to quench the hunger of many needy.
- **Development of the nation** – If the surplus food is consumed by the needy there would be no need to import more food and money can be utilized for developmental work, fetching more profits to the country.
- **Good nutritional status of the population** – When no food would be wasted the people would have good nutritional status as the environment would not be polluted anymore which was once by the wasted food.





Food Wasteage can be Decomposed as –

- Anaerobic digestion produces both useful gaseous products and a solid fibrous "compostable" material. Anaerobic digestion plants can provide energy from waste by burning the methane created from food and other organic wastes to generate electricity, defraying the plants costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Food waste coming through the sanitary sewers from garbage disposal units is treated along with other sewage and contributes to sludge.
- The feeding of food scraps to animals is historically, the most common way of dealing with household food waste.
- Food waste can be biodegraded by composting, and resumed to fertilized soil.
- Vermicomposting is the practice of feeding scraps to worms who produce fertilized soil as a byproduct.
- Food waste can be composted at home too.

Conclusion-

It was concluded that the enormous population of the world cannot be fed by the small yield or farmers. Around two billion people are on the range of starvation while others throw around food as if it was dirt. Food is a gift given by good. It is not meant to be wasted. I want retailers, shopkeepers, transporters, consumers, home makers and home scientists to save food for those poor souls, who get nothing more than a few pieces of bread and half a cup of water a day.

Help Them By Saving Food

My Message

Save Food at least for those who deserve it.

But are drowning in their own hunger and despair.

*Almost two billion people do not get enough food
and are begging for it save food at least for them.*

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