

Waste fee row: Bengaluru residents seek D K Shivakumar's intervention

Bengaluru residents seek D K Shivakumar's intervention on 'discriminatory' waste fee

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DHNS

With D K Shivakumar set to assume office as chief minister, apartment residents in Bengaluru are seeking his intervention against what they describe as a discriminatory waste management policy that charges apartment complexes up to Rs 12 per kg of waste while independent houses continue to pay nominal user fees through property tax.

Introduced a year ago, the policy, they say, has created a monopoly for empanelled vendors, eliminated competitive pricing and increased waste management costs by as much as six to eight times. The issue is expected to be among the first civic concerns that apartment associations plan to raise with the new Chief Minister.

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However, apartment complexes classified as Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs) are required to hand over waste to authorised processors at rates linked to waste generation. In cases where both wet and dry waste are collected, the charge works out to Rs 12 per kg, translating to about Rs 360 per flat per month or Rs 5,097 annually, including GST.

According to calculations shared by Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF), a 150-unit complex that currently spends around Rs 9,000 a month on waste management could see its bill rise to Rs 54,000 under the Rs 12-per kg model. A 500-unit apartment currently spending around Rs 25,000 a month could end up paying Rs 1.8 lakh, while a 1,000-unit complex could see monthly costs rise from Rs 45,000 to Rs 3.6 lakh.

“Independent houses pay around Rs 1,200 per year, whereas apartments are being charged as much as Rs 4,500 to Rs 5,000 per flat annually. If an apartment complex has fewer than 100 units, the rates

are almost on par with independent houses. This disparity makes no sense,” said BAF president Satish Mallya.

He said many apartment associations had not budgeted for such a steep increase. “In large apartments, the associations will find it difficult to collect the charges as many individual owners will not co-operate.”

Before the policy came into force, apartment associations had the liberty to engage the services of any of the waste processing firms. Now, the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) has empanelled only one firm in each corporation jurisdiction, leaving residents with little room to negotiate rates or service standards.

Valli Srinivasan, joint secretary of Bangalore Apartments Federation (BAF) said private vendors are now seeking a flat Rs 300 per month per apartment in addition to 18% GST. “That is at least two-and-a-half times more than what many of us were paying earlier,” she said.