International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2350-0328

Vol. 13, Issue 2, February 2026

`"Development of Innovative Construction Materials from Processed Solid Waste for Sustainable Civil Engineering Applications: Enhancing Environmental Performance and Reducing Construction Costs"

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ABSTRACT:
The rapid increase in population and urbanization has resulted in an alarming growth of solid waste generation worldwide. At the same time, the construction industry continues to consume vast amounts of raw materials, contributing significantly to environmental degradation and escalating costs. This research aims to bridge these two challenges by developing innovative construction materials derived from processed solid waste streams, including municipal solid waste (MSW) residues, industrial by-products, and construction and demolition (C&D) waste.

The study involves collection, processing, and characterization of different waste fractions, followed by their incorporation into construction materials such as concrete, bricks, tiles, and paver blocks. A systematic experimental program was carried out to evaluate physical, mechanical, and durability properties. Performance indicators such as compressive strength, water absorption, thermal conductivity, and leachability were analyzed in accordance with Indian Standards (IS) and ASTM specifications.

The results indicate that processed solid waste materials, when used as partial replacement for conventional raw materials, can enhance mechanical properties while significantly reducing cost and carbon footprint. For example, incorporating processed MSW ash in cementations composites improved compressive strength by up to 12% compared to conventional mixes, while cost savings ranged from 10–20%. In addition, environmental performance was enhanced by reducing waste disposal to landfills and lowering greenhouse gas emissions associated with cement production.

This thesis concludes that the utilization of processed solid waste as a raw material in civil engineering applications is a viable, sustainable, and cost-effective alternative. The findings contribute to circular economy practices, promote sustainable construction, and open new avenues for large-scale implementation in infrastructure projects.

KEYWORDS: Solid waste, Sustainable construction, Waste-derived materials, Cost reduction, Environmental performance, Circular economy.

I.INTRODUCTION

India, being one of the most densely populated and rapidly developing countries in the world, faces severe challenges in the areas of low-cost housing and solid waste management (SWM). These issues are more acute in India than in many other nations due to a complex combination of factors such as land scarcity, limited financial resources, outdated or inappropriate technologies, and inadequate infrastructure.

The shortage of affordable land and a poor land-to-man ratio significantly hinder efforts to provide low-cost housing and efficient waste management systems. Municipalities often struggle with limited revenue streams and insufficient per capita income levels, which leads to substandard service delivery. As a result, many people are forced to live without proper housing, and fewer residents are willing or able to pay for municipal services. This creates a vicious cycle where poor revenue further weakens service provision, leading to continued deterioration in living conditions.

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2350-0328

IJARSET IMPACT FACTOR 7.150

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High construction costs and lack of adequate urban infrastructure result in the underutilization of valuable resources—such as land, funds, and technologies—which further compromises service quality. Moreover, rapid population growth and migration to urban areas in search of employment have significantly increased the demand for both housing and waste management services. As land is a finite and inelastic resource, and water and air are limited cyclical resources, the burden on municipal systems continues to grow.

Urban local bodies often face the dual challenge of needing to build more infrastructures without a corresponding increase in financial resources. This has been particularly evident in the expansion of slum-dwelling units, which are typically unplanned and overcrowded. These settlements contribute heavily to sanitation issues and the generation of unmanaged waste. The lack of proper land for waste disposal, along with inadequate systems for the collection, segregation, transportation, and treatment of waste, further worsens the situation.

In slum areas, poor planning, overcrowding, and limited access often prevent garbage collection vehicles from reaching households, resulting in the accumulation of waste and related health hazards.

Additionally, the unavailability of affordable construction materials and a lack of proper waste characterization systems reduce the effectiveness of existing infrastructure. Often, waste collection vehicles become unsuitable for operation, or there are simply not enough of them, adding to the already overwhelming pressure on the system.

In summary, India's intertwined challenges of low-cost housing shortages and inefficient solid waste management are driven by rapid urbanization, financial limitations, and planning deficiencies. Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach involving better planning, technological innovation, sustainable infrastructure development, and stronger financial mechanisms at the municipal level.

A. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the urgent need for the development of low-cost construction materials derived from processed municipal solid waste—an otherwise growing threat to sustainable environmental development. By addressing both the housing shortage and the challenge of solid waste management (SWM), the study contributes to a dual-purpose solution that promotes environmental preservation while delivering economic benefits.

The core contribution of this research lies in the creation of innovative construction materials developed from the solid waste processing systems at the NITTTR campus. These materials present a promising alternative to conventional construction inputs, offering a sustainable and cost-effective solution particularly suited to the needs of urban areas in India.

The study underscores the critical role of integrating waste management with housing infrastructure through instant solid waste disposal mechanisms. However, further scientific research is essential to comprehensively evaluate the long-term environmental impacts, structural integrity, and sustainability of construction materials produced from processed solid waste.

In conclusion, this research sets the groundwork for a sustainable model of urban development that merges solid waste management with affordable housing solutions, paving the way for cleaner cities and improved quality of life.

II.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research investigates the development of innovative construction materials derived from scientifically processed municipal solid waste (MSW), with a case study based at National Institute Of Technical Teacher Training & Research (NITTTR), NITTTR, located in Sector 26 of Chandigarh in the sub-Himalayan plains, has implemented an in-house scientific solid waste disposal system in accordance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.

This study aims to evaluate the environmental and economic feasibility of converting zero-value solid waste—specifically sludge waste, foundry waste sand, and non-recyclable polythene—into paver blocks, while promoting scientific waste disposal and resource recovery, without the use of cement concrete or expensive epoxy-based binders, thereby ensuring a self-sustainable solid waste management approach and low cost construction material.

An extensive literature review, supported by field observations and primary data collection, was undertaken to examine the challenges and opportunities associated with the existing waste management system. The study adopts a comparative analytical approach to identify gaps in current practices and to propose sustainable, low-cost alternatives for material recovery.

Key parameters considered in the development of the research methodology include the elimination of high-cost value addition processes, such as the use of cement concrete, sand, or other expensive epoxy-based binders and treatment technologies, in order to achieve an economically viable and environmentally sustainable solution.

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

ISSN: 2350-0328

IJARSET IMPACT FACTOR 7.150

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The findings indicate that existing waste management systems frequently lack long-term environmental and economic viability, thereby underscoring the need for self-sustaining processing and utilization solutions that rely exclusively on in-situ waste materials, without the import or purchase of external inputs.

III.DATA COLLECTION AND SCRUTINY

Data collection and analysis constitute a fundamental component of the research process, as the reliability and validity of research findings are directly dependent on the quality of the data collected. Accurate and systematic data enable researchers to interpret results objectively, contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge, and provide a credible foundation for future studies. Consequently, maintaining rigor in data collection and subjecting the data to thorough scrutiny are essential to ensure the authenticity and trustworthiness of the research. Research data must be carefully examined to eliminate any possibility of error, misrepresentation, or falsification, whether intentional or unintentional. Even minor inaccuracies arising from measurement errors, recording mistakes, or improper handling of data can compromise the integrity of the study and may be perceived as research misconduct. Therefore, ensuring data integrity through proper validation and verification mechanisms is critical for safeguarding both the researcher's credibility and the scientific value of the study.

Given the complex nature of research and the large volumes of data typically involved in urban-scale studies, the occurrence of errors is often unavoidable. Data validation serves as an effective tool to minimize such inaccuracies by ensuring consistency, completeness, and correctness of the collected information. In accordance with the guidance provided by the research supervisors, primary and secondary data related to the composition and management of legacy solid waste were collected from the landfill site of Panchkula Municipal Corporation. This data encompasses various solid waste management activities undertaken within Panchkula city and forms the basis for analyzing the exact composition and characteristics of municipal solid waste in the study area.

In addition to legacy waste and municipal solid waste samples, sludge samples were collected from the Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) of Hotel Mount View, Sector 10A, Chandigarh. Furthermore, waste foundry sand samples were obtained from Godawari Industry Pvt. Ltd., located on Narayangarh Road, Ambala City.

Table 4.1

This table presents the baseline assessment of municipal solid waste generation in Panchkula City, detailing the number of households, commercial establishments, public spaces, and the daily quantities of solid waste and construction & demolition waste generated, collected, and disposed.

"Baseline Assessment of Municipal Solid Waste Generation in Panchkula City"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1	Households in City	116231
2	Commercial Shops	10603
3	Transport hubs	13
4	Hotels	39
5	Prominent Parks	17
6	Tourist Areas	5
7	Solid Waste generated in City Tonnes per day TPD	185.47
8	C & D Waste generated in City Tonnes per day TPD	29.05
9	Quantity of solid waste collected per day in Tonnes	185.47
10	Quantity of solid waste disposed in dumpsite per day in Tonnes	157.42

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

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Table 4.2

This table summarizes the current status of solid waste management service delivery in Panchkula City, with a focus on waste segregation, storage practices at source, and compliance levels among residential and non-residential premises.

"Overview of Solid Waste Management Service Delivery Status"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1	Segregation and storage of waste at source	Yes
2	Whether SOLID WASTE is stored at source in domestic/commercial/ institutional bins, If yes,	Yes
	Percentage of households practice storage of waste at source in commercial/ institutional bins	100%
	Percentage of non- residential premises practice storage of waste at source in commercial/ institutional bins	100%
	Percentage of households disposer throw solid waste on the streets Note: %(if any person found throwing solid waste in the streets, his/her challan is issued.)	0.5 to 1
	Percentage of non-residential premises dispose of throw solid waste on the streets	0%
	Whether solid waste is stored at source in a segregated form, If yes	Yes
	Percentage of premises segregating the waste at source	100%

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

Table 4.3

This table illustrates the coverage and efficiency of door-to-door solid waste collection services in Panchkula City, highlighting ward-level coverage and daily waste collection and disposal quantities.

"Coverage and Efficiency of Door-to-Door Solid Waste Collection Services"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1	Whether door to door collection (D2D) of solid waste is being in the city/ town	Yes
2	If yes, Number of wards covered in D2D collection of waste	20 Wards
2	Commercial Shops	10603
3	Transport hubs	13
4	Hotels	39
5	Prominent Parks	17
6	Tourist Areas	5
7	Solid Waste generated in City Tonnes per day TPD	185.47
8	C & D Waste generated in City Tonnes per day TPD	29.05
9	Quantity of solid waste collected per day in Tonnes	185.47
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Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

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Table 4.4

This table provides details of the types and number of vehicles deployed by the Panchkula Municipal Corporation for primary and secondary solid waste collection, transportation, and handling operations.

"Details of Vehicle Types and Their Numbers"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1.	Tractors and Trolleys	10
2.	Non tipping Truck	NIL
3.	Tipping Truck	10
4.	Dumper Placers	20
5.	Refuse collectors/ compactors	2
6.	Others Small vehicles used for D to D collection	284
7.	JCB	2
8.	Hook Loader	2
9.	**Total**	**330**

Table 4.5

This table outlines the types and distribution of secondary solid waste storage facilities available in the city, indicating the absence of community-level storage infrastructure.

"Types and Distribution of Secondary Solid Waste Storage Facilities in the City"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1.	Open solid waste storage	NIL
2	Masonry bins	Nil
3	C.C Cylinder bins	Nil
4	Covered Rooms spaces	Nil
5	Covered metal /plastic containers	Nil
6	Upto 1.1 m3 bins	Nil
7	Upto 2 m3 bins	Nil
8	Upto 5m3 bins	Nil
9	Abpve Upto 5m3 containers	Nil

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

Table 4.6

This table describes the solid waste disposal infrastructure adopted by the Panchkula Municipal Corporation, indicating that no waste-to-energy or advanced treatment technologies are currently implemented.

"Solid Waste Disposal Infrastructure Adopted by the Panchkula Municipal Corporation (PCP) in the City"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1.	Waste to Energy Likes, incineration, gasification, pyrolysis or any other technology Qty. in TPD	Nil

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

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Table 4.7

This table presents the estimated quantity of legacy solid waste at the Panchkula landfill site, along with daily fresh waste inflow and the total area available for waste disposal as of June 2025.

"Details of legacy solid waste lying at the city's landfill site managed by the Panchkula Municipal Corporation (PMC) as on June 2025."

S. No.	Descriptions	ed Quantity Tons
1.	Legacy solid waste biodegradable almost converted into bio soil with odour and moisture	1,15,000
2.	New /Fresh solid waste comes per day	157.42
3.	Area of each such sites available for waste disposal	5.35 Hectare

Table 4.8

This table provides an overview of other waste processing and management technologies in the city, showing that no co-processing, waste-to-energy, or alternative disposal methods are presently in use.

"Other Waste Processing and Management Technologies Implemented in the City"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1.	Waste to Energy Likes, incineration, gasification, pyrolysis or any other technology Qty. in TPD	Nil
2	Co-Processing	Nil
3	Combustible Solid waste supplied to any cement plant	Nil
3	Others type of processing or disposal	Nil

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

Table 4.9

This table highlights the availability of secondary treatment and waste segregation infrastructure in Panchkula City, including sector-level facilities and the absence of material recovery facilities (MRFs).

"Secondary Treatment and Waste Segregation Infrastructure in the City"

S. No.	Descriptions	Quantity/ Numbers
1.	Sector 7 & Sector 15	2
2	GTS (Garbage Transfer Stations)/MRF Material Recovery Facilities)	nil

Source: Panchkula Corporation PKL

Table 4.10

This table presents the percentage-wise physical and quantitative composition of mixed legacy solid waste collected from different locations within the PMC Sector 23 landfill site.

"Physical Screening and Quantitative Composition Analysis (Percentage-wise) of Mixed Legacy Solid Waste at PMC Sector 23 Landfill Site"

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ISSN: 2350-0328

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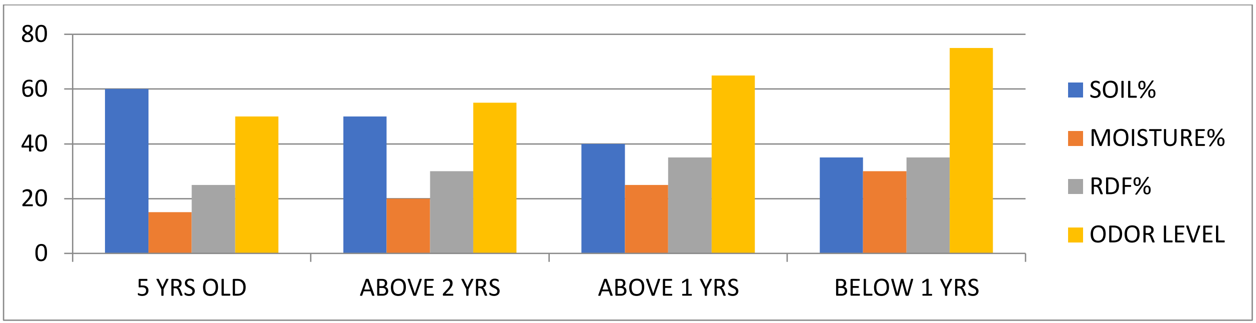

Source : To know the exact physical composition of legacy waste in Panchkula city the samples were collected from different areas of landfill site.

Table -4.11

This table summarizes the typical moisture content ranges of different types of sewage and wastewater treatment sludge, indicating their physical condition and suitability for further processing.

Type of Sludge	Moisture in (%)	Remarks
Raw (Primary) Sludge	**95–99%**	Very wet, freshly settled solids
Activated (Secondary) Sludge	**98–99.5%**	Highly dilute biological sludge
Digested Sludge	**90–95%**	After anaerobic digestion
Dewatered Sludge (press / centrifuge)	**65–80%**	Semi-solid cake
Filter Press Sludge Cake	**50–70%**	Better dewatering
Dried Sludge (solar/mechanical)	**10–30%**	Suitable for fuel or composting

"Typical Moisture Content in Sewage / Wastewater Treatment Sludge"

Table -4.12

This table describes the chemical characteristics of sewage and wastewater sludge, including pH range, volatile solids, and total solids content at different treatment stages.

Chemical Properties of Sewage / Wastewater Sludge

Type of Sludge	**pH**	**Volatile Solid**	**Total Solids**
Raw (Primary) Sludge	6.0 – 7.0	**55 – 75%**	1 – 5%
Digested Sludge	7.0 – 8.5		
Dewatered sludge cake			20 – 35%
Dried sludge:			>70%

Table -4.13

This table presents the typical concentration ranges of heavy metals found in municipal sewage sludge, based on CPCB and EPA reference standards.

Heavy Metal Properties of Sewage / Wastewater Sludge

S. No.	**Type of Metal**	Range (mg/kg)
1	Cadmium (Cd)	1 – 10
2	Chromium (Cr)	50 – 1,000
3	Copper (Cu)	200 – 1,000
4	Lead (Pb)	50 – 300
5	Nickel (Ni)	30 – 200
6	Zinc (Zn)	500 – 3,000
7	Mercury (Hg)	0.5 – 5

(Typical municipal sludge – CPCB / EPA reference ranges)

Table -4.14

This table shows the moisture content ranges of various types of foundry waste sand, reflecting differences in binder systems and storage conditions.

Moisture Content in Foundry Waste Sand

Foundry Sand Type	**Moisture%**
Green sand waste	**2 – 5%**
Stockpiled green sand	**3 – 8%**
Resin-bonded sand	**0.2 – 1.0%**
Core sand	**<0.5%**
Shell mould sand	**<0.3%**

Table -4.15

This table provides the standard chemical composition of foundry waste sand on a dry basis, highlighting major oxide constituents commonly observed in Indian foundry practices.

Below is the **standard chemical composition of Foundry Waste Sand (FWS)**, based on **Indian foundry practices, CPCB studies, and international (EPA/AFS) references**. Values vary with **sand type, metal cast, and binder system**.

Chemical Composition of Foundry Waste Sand (Dry Basis)

Major Oxides (% by weight)

Component	**Typical Range (%)**	**Source**
Silicon Dioxide (SiO_2)	**80 – 95**	Main constituent (quartz sand)
Aluminum Oxide (Al_2O_3)	**4 – 10**	From clay (bentonite)
Iron Oxide (Fe_2O_3)	**0.5 – 5**	From metal fines & oxidation
Calcium Oxide (CaO)	**0.1 – 3**	Fluxes, additives
Magnesium Oxide (MgO)	**0.1 – 2**	Minor mineral content
Sodium Oxide (Na_2O)	**0.1 – 1**	Bentonite / additives
Potassium Oxide (K_2O)	**0.1 – 1**	Feldspar impurities
Titanium Dioxide (TiO_2)	**0.1 – 0.5**	Trace mineral

Objectives of Blending

Foundry waste sand helps to:

- Reduce **excess moisture**
- Improve **porosity & airflow**
- Increase **structural strength**
- Reduce **stickiness & odor**
- Stabilize **thermal and biological processes**

ISSN: 2350-0328

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3 **Tri-Blending: Sludge + MSW + Foundry Sand**

(Highly recommended for integrated plants)

Important Ratios for various Applications

Table -4.16

This table presents recommended tri-blending ratios of sludge, municipal solid waste, and foundry waste sand for different applications such as composting, RDF production, thermal processing, and sludge stabilization.

Application	Sludge :	MSW:	FWS
Compost /fertilizer	**2 :**	**2 :**	**1**
Pellets/ RDF	**2 :**	**1 :**	**1**
Thermal processing	**1 :**	**1 :**	**1**
Sludge stabilization	**3 :**	**1 :**	**1**

Table -4.17

This table summarizes experimental trials conducted to develop tri-blended paver blocks using sludge, plastic waste, and foundry waste sand, along with their performance outcomes.

RATIOS FOR VARIOUS IMPLEMENTED FOR MAKING TRI-BLENDING PAVER BLOCKS % BY WEIGHT

Trial No.	Sludge%	Zero Value Plastic %	FWS%	Result
1	25	50	25	Failed
2	30	50	20	Failed
3	20	60	20	Partially successful
4	20	65	15	Improved quality
5	20	70	10	Passed all parameters

Table -4.18

This table presents the effect of varying temperature, pressure, and curing duration on the quality and performance of tri-blended paver blocks.

VARIOUS TEMPERATURES APPLIED FOR MAKING TRI-BLENDING PAVER BLOCKS

Trial No.	Temperature in Degree Celsius	Pressure in MPa	Time Duration	Result
1	450	10	15 Minutes	Failed
2	450	10	30 Minutes	Failed
3	450	10	45 Minutes	Partially successful
4	500	10	15 Minutes	Satisfactory
5	500	10	30 Minutes	Passed all parameters
6	550	10	15 Minutes	More Finished

Table -4.19

This table summarizes the final mechanical test results of tri-blended paver blocks, including flexural strength and equivalent compressive strength after temperature correction.

TEST RESULTS OF FINAL TRI-BLENDING PAVER BLOCKS

Paver 40mm

Flexural Strength = 3/2×13.6/200×150/(40)2 = **9.6 N/mm²**

Corresponding Compressive Strength = Paver 55mm

Formula = flexural strength × 0.7 (approx)

Compressive = 100.1 N/mm²

Temp correction factor

9.6 = 0.7

1321×1000/23603 = 55.96 × 1.06 = **58.9 N/mm²**

International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

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Flexural and Compressive Strength Calculation

Concrete Paver Blocks

1. Paver Thickness: 40 mm

Flexural Strength

Flexural Strength = 3/2×13.6/200×150/(40)2 = **9.6 N/mm²**

2. Corresponding Compressive Strength

Assumption / Empirical Relation

Flexural Strength≈0.7×Compressive Strength

Compressive Strength =9.60.7=100.1 N/mm2

Temperature Correction Factor: 1.06

3. Paver Thickness: 55 mm

1321×1000/23603=55.96

Applying temperature correction:

55.96×1.06=58.9 N/mm2

Final Results Summary

Parameter	Value
Flexural Strength (40 mm paver)	**9.6 N/mm²**
Equivalent Compressive Strength	**100.1 N/mm²**
Compressive Strength (55 mm paver, corrected)	**58.9 N/mm²**

IV.RESULTS

The present study comprehensively evaluated the generation, characteristics, management practices, and resource recovery potential of municipal solid waste (MSW), legacy waste, sewage sludge, and foundry waste sand within the Panchkula urban region. Systematic data collection and validation ensured reliability and accuracy of findings, forming a scientifically sound basis for integrated waste management planning and sustainable material utilization.

The baseline assessment revealed that Panchkula City generates approximately **185.47 tonnes per day (TPD)** of municipal solid waste along with **29.05 TPD of construction and demolition (C&D) waste**. The municipal authority achieves nearly **100% door-to-door waste collection coverage across 20 wards**, with complete source-level segregation reported in both residential and non-residential premises. Despite efficient collection systems, about **157.42 TPD of waste continues to be disposed of at the landfill site**, indicating heavy dependence on dumping rather than scientific processing or resource recovery technologies.

Infrastructure analysis showed adequate transportation capacity comprising **330 operational vehicles**, including tractors, dumper placers, compactors, and small collection vehicles. However, the absence of secondary storage facilities, Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), waste-to-energy plants, co-processing systems, or advanced treatment technologies highlights a significant gap between waste collection efficiency and waste processing capability.

The Panchkula landfill site currently contains approximately **1,15,000 tonnes of legacy waste**, much of which has partially biodegraded into bio-soil with residual moisture and odor. Continuous inflow of fresh waste further stresses the available landfill area of **5.35 hectares**, emphasizing the urgent need for landfill remediation and waste valorization strategies.

Laboratory characterization of sewage sludge indicated high moisture content ranging from **95–99% in raw sludge** to **10–30% after drying**, confirming the necessity of dewatering prior to reuse. Chemical analysis demonstrated suitable pH and organic matter content for stabilization and co-processing, although trace heavy metals remain within typical regulatory reference ranges. Similarly, foundry waste sand exhibited high silica content (**80–95% SiO_2**) with low moisture levels, making it an effective structural and moisture-balancing material when blended with organic wastes.

Tri-blending experiments involving **sludge, municipal solid waste, and foundry waste sand** demonstrated significant improvement in waste stabilization, porosity enhancement, moisture reduction, and odor control.

ISSN: 2350-0328
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Recommended blending ratios were successfully identified for composting, RDF production, thermal applications, and sludge stabilization, supporting integrated waste utilization approaches.

Further experimental trials for manufacturing **tri-blended paver blocks** using sludge, plastic waste, and foundry waste sand established an optimized composition of **20% sludge, 70% plastic waste, and 10% foundry sand**, which successfully passed all mechanical performance parameters. Process optimization indicated that a temperature of **500–550°C**, pressure of **10 MPa**, and curing duration of **15–30 minutes** produced superior structural quality.

Mechanical testing confirmed strong engineering performance of the developed paver blocks, achieving:

- **Flexural Strength (40 mm paver): 9.6 N/mm²**
- **Equivalent Compressive Strength: 100.1 N/mm²**
- **Corrected Compressive Strength (55 mm paver): 58.9 N/mm²**

These values satisfy and exceed typical requirements for non-structural paving applications, demonstrating the technical feasibility of converting multi-stream urban wastes into value-added construction materials.

Overall, the study establishes that while Panchkula possesses an efficient waste collection framework, substantial opportunities exist for scientific processing, landfill mining, and circular resource recovery. The integrated tri-blending approach presents a sustainable solution capable of reducing landfill burden, stabilizing problematic waste streams, conserving natural resources, and generating commercially viable products. The findings strongly support the adoption of decentralized and technology-driven waste processing systems to transition toward a **circular economy–based urban solid waste management model**.

Concluding Remark

The research establishes that **processed solid waste can be transformed into high-performance, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable construction materials**. With continued innovation, regulatory support, and field validation, such materials have the potential to **redefine sustainable civil engineering practices** and contribute significantly to **circular economy and climate resilience goals**.

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