

Construction Waste Management and Recycling Practices on Site

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doi.org/10.64643/IJIRTV12I11-201234-459

Abstract—Construction activities generate significant quantities of waste, leading to environmental, economic, and operational challenges in the construction industry. Effective waste management and recycling practices are essential for sustainable construction and minimizing environmental impacts. This study evaluates current construction waste management practices on selected construction sites and investigates opportunities for enhancing recycling and reuse strategies. Data were collected through field surveys, site observations, and interviews with project managers, engineers, and labourers. The study identifies the major sources and types of construction waste, including concrete debris, wood, metal, bricks, and packaging materials. Findings indicate that a substantial portion of construction waste can be recycled or reused when proper segregation and planning practices are implemented. However, inadequate worker awareness, poor segregation methods, and limited recycling infrastructure hinder efficient waste management. Based on the findings, a practical framework is proposed for integrating waste management into project planning and execution through worker training, onsite segregation, prefabrication methods, and collaboration with certified recycling agencies. The study concludes that improved construction waste management practices can significantly reduce project costs, improve productivity, and support environmental sustainability.

Index Terms—Construction Waste Management, Recycling, Sustainable Construction, Waste Segregation, Construction Site Management, Environmental Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

The construction industry is one of the largest contributors to global solid waste generation.

Construction and demolition activities produce significant amounts of waste materials such as concrete, timber, metal, bricks, plastics, and packaging materials. Improper disposal of construction waste causes environmental degradation, land pollution, increased landfill burden, and unnecessary project costs.

Construction waste management has become an essential aspect of sustainable construction practices. Effective waste management not only reduces environmental impact but also improves material efficiency, minimizes disposal costs, and enhances project profitability.

This study focuses on assessing current waste management and recycling practices on construction sites and identifying practical strategies for improving construction waste handling and sustainability.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies have emphasized the importance of construction waste management in improving sustainability and reducing project inefficiencies.

Begum et al. (2007) identified poor material handling, design changes, and inadequate storage as major contributors to construction waste generation.

Tam and Tam (2006) highlighted the effectiveness of onsite sorting and waste segregation in improving recycling rates in construction projects.

Osmani et al. (2008) found that lack of awareness among construction professionals significantly affects waste minimization efforts.

Poon et al. (2001) demonstrated that prefabrication and modular construction techniques reduce material wastage substantially.

Lu and Yuan (2011) emphasized the role of policy frameworks and regulations in promoting construction waste recycling practices.

These studies confirm that proactive waste management strategies improve sustainability and reduce construction costs.

III. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous research indicates that construction waste generation is influenced by poor planning, material over-ordering, design modifications, improper storage, and inadequate worker training. Effective waste management strategies such as segregation, recycling, reuse, and prefabrication can substantially reduce waste generation.

However, many construction sites still lack structured waste management systems. Limited awareness, insufficient regulations, and poor infrastructure remain major barriers to implementation.

This study aims to bridge this gap by evaluating real-world site practices and proposing practical solutions.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-method approach involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected from selected construction sites through:

- Site Observations
- Structured Questionnaires
- Interviews with Engineers, Project Managers, and Labourers

Study Parameters

The investigation focused on:

- Types of Waste Generated
- Waste Segregation Practices
- Recycling and Reuse Methods
- Awareness of Workers
- Challenges in Waste Management

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of collected data revealed that the most common construction wastes generated onsite include:

Waste Material	Percentage Contribution
Concrete Debris	28%
Wood Waste	18%
Metal Scrap	15%
Brick Waste	20%
Packaging Materials	12%
Others	7%

Key Findings

- Most construction sites lack systematic waste segregation practices.
- Recyclable materials are often mixed with general waste.
- Worker awareness regarding recycling practices is limited.
- Contractors rarely coordinate with certified recycling agencies.
- Material wastage due to poor storage and handling is significant.

Discussion

The findings indicate that proper planning and waste segregation can significantly reduce construction waste. Recyclable materials such as concrete, steel, and timber can be effectively reused when handled properly. However, lack of training and infrastructure remains a major challenge.

VI. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

A practical waste management framework is proposed consisting of the following stages:

1. Waste Identification During Planning Stage
2. Material Optimization and Accurate Quantity Estimation
3. Onsite Waste Segregation by Category
4. Worker Training and Awareness Programs
5. Reuse of Materials Wherever Feasible
6. Coordination with Certified Recycling Agencies
7. Periodic Waste Auditing and Monitoring

VII. CONCLUSION

Construction waste management and recycling practices play a critical role in sustainable

construction. The study concludes that significant quantities of construction waste can be reduced through proper planning, segregation, reuse, and recycling. Worker awareness and management commitment are essential for successful implementation.

Adopting structured waste management practices can reduce environmental impact, minimize project costs, and improve site productivity.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement mandatory waste management plans for all construction projects.
- Conduct regular worker training on waste segregation and recycling.
- Encourage use of prefabricated and modular construction components.
- Promote partnerships with certified recycling facilities.
- Develop stricter regulations for construction waste disposal.

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