PREFACE

One form of pollution that doesn’t generally come to anyone’s mind is pollution through untreated waste scattered all across. Managing waste, moreover solid waste, has become a foremost challenge over the years. With radically increasing population the generation of solid waste has increased at a bombarding rate. Lack of awareness about appropriate waste disposal and inefficiency in its management leaves it decomposing in the drains and sewage, which ultimately get blocked, then get mixed with groundwater and give rise to several diseases. There has to be some way to break this vicious cycle.

There is urgent need to ensure that people don’t get away after polluting our environment and somebody must oversees the whole process to guarantee safe management of waste. This also imbibes a sense of discretion within the community and makes them think before they dispose anything here and there.

Adequate legal framework exists in the country to deal with municipal solid waste management. What is lacking is its implementation. Despite of a rigorous legislation, open dumping is the most widespread form of waste disposal. The possible reason for poor implementation could be a combination of social, technical, institutional and financial issues. Public awareness, political will and public participation is essential for the successful implementation of the legal framework and to have an integrated approach towards sustainable management of municipal waste.

The economic and demographic growth of Silchar in Assam like other cities in India is posturing serious challenges to the urban local authorities. With rapidly swelling urban population, the prerequisite for infrastructure and services increase manifold. Solid waste management is one
such service that needs to be effectively provided to ensure an urban environment favorable to
the well-being and productivity of the residents. Some areas in Silchar receive little (in some
cases no) solid waste collection services because local governments have no resources to cover
all households. Thus in the absence of collection services, households use forms of disposal most
of which are heavily polluting. There is also lack of information on household solid waste
generation, and how much households value solid waste management. This study therefore aims
at identifying the determinants of solid waste generation at household level and the
determination of households’ willingness to pay (WTP) for improved solid waste management
services. Some econometric models are used in this study to find out the probability of WTP of
the households for better quality of environment. Keeping in view the various problems faced by
the Silchar municipality a few recommendations are also suggested for improvement of waste
management in the area.

Non-market valuation methods provide data and help the policy makers to take decisions on how
best to manage the natural resources. Two common approaches to the non-market valuation are
Travel Cost Method and Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) generally used for assessing
economic value of environmental resources. In the present study, CVM is used to estimate
willingness to pay for sustainable urban waste management in Silchar Municipal Area of Cachar
District of Assam.

The present study is arranged and demonstrated in six different chapters. General introduction of
the study is elucidated in the Chapter-1. In this chapter, rationale and basis of the present study,
definition of sustainable waste management and importance of it in growing cities, purpose of
the study, objectives, hypotheses and present waste management scenario are explained. The
purpose of this section is to present a comprehensive view of the basic ground and necessities of economic valuation of sustainable waste management in growing cities like Silchar.

Chapter-2 of the thesis entitled ‘Review of Literature’ unfolds in-depth explanation of various research works which are conducted on CVM as technique of economic valuation, willingness to pay for waste management in foreign countries and also in India since 1980s. This is followed by a discussion on the research gaps.

The purpose of the Chapter-3 is to present a theoretical and conceptual framework and a preliminary model. It is based on the findings presented in the literature reviewed earlier. The model provides the framework for the research design and data analysis. The theoretical frameworks serve as a foundation to the proposed model and ensuing discussion will highlight the relationship and the influence of these theoretical concepts in relation to the development of the model.

In Chapter-4 of the thesis, entitled ‘Methodology, Models and Data’, the principal topics discussed are: process of selecting samples and relevant information for the present study, and the background and procedure of selecting particular methods to attain the objectives of the present research work.

In Chapter-5 of the thesis, an analysis of results of the present research work has been furnished. It is divided into two different parts: descriptive statistical analysis and econometric analysis. Descriptive statistical analysis part presents the results on socio-economic characteristics or background of households and waste management practices of Silchar residents and in the second part findings are presented according to the objectives of the study.
Chapter-6 relates to summary, suggestions and policy prescriptions of the present research work, which are drawn on the basis of information collected from households of Silchar Municipal Area. It is followed by the conclusion part of the study.