CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

‘Answers magically appear through incubating and percolating’¹

Ever since the society came into being, humans and animals have used the resources of earth to support life and to dispose the waste. In earlier days, the disposal of waste did not pose significant problems as the population was very small and a vast expanse of land was available for the assimilation of such wastes. The modern life style with emphasis on “consume and discard” culture has brought with it, the acute problem of waste disposal in the society. The continuous growth of population, increasing consumerism and technological advancements with depleting natural resources are mainly responsible for increase in generation of biomedical waste in the hospitals. Hospital wastes have always been considered as potentially hazardous in view of the inherent potential for dissemination of infection. Management of biomedical waste emanating from hospitals is posing a great challenge in the present-day scenario requiring active and immediate concern and considerations of the medical fraternity.²

Management of health-care waste is an integral part of hospital hygiene and infection control. The biomedical waste from hospital, if not handled properly may assume dangerous proportions to threaten the very roots of humanity.³ Many hospitals are yet to implement the proper disposal of hospital wastes and are still dumping their wastes in municipal dumps without any segregation. At many hospitals, it is normal phenomenon to find large dumps of biomedical wastes consisting of used IV plastic bottles with IV drip sets and needles, disposable syringes, bandages, swabs, drugs, human tissues, blood soaked items, sanitary napkins and pads, plaster moulds etc in addition to kitchen wastes, paper and other household waste items. In recent years, wider variety of potentially hazardous ingredients have become part of the hospital waste.

Health-care waste has to be considered as a reservoir of pathogenic microorganisms, which can cause contamination and give rise to infection. If waste is inadequately managed, these microorganisms can be transmitted by direct contact, in the air, or by a variety of vectors. Infectious waste contributes in this way to the risk of nosocomial infections, putting the health of hospital personnel, and patients at risk. All individuals exposed to hazardous health-care waste are potentially at risk, including those within health-care establishments that generate hazardous waste, and those outside these sources who either handle such waste or are exposed to it as a