
DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, AND PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF A BIOMETHANATION SYSTEM FOR WET ORGANIC FRACTIONS OF MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE IN AN INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUS

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ABSTRACT

Traditional methods of disposing of municipal solid waste (MSW) are becoming unsustainable in rapidly expanding metropolitan areas, making MSW management an urgent social and environmental concern. Localized and ecologically friendly options are even more important in light of public opposition to constructing centralized waste treatment facilities close to residential areas.

This research details a method for evaluating and reusing wet organic waste from segregated municipal solid waste (MSW) on a university campus. In order to establish if the biodegradable fraction was suitable for anaerobic digestion, it was first isolated, measured, and tested using recognized analytical procedures. To assess the possibility of producing biogas, controlled biomethanation trials were run, and the leftover digestate was studied for its use as an organic soil amendment.

Using a single campus as an example, the authors present a small-scale circular system that recycles nutrients, energy, and garbage. Producing valuable byproducts like biogas and bio-fertilizer, the strategy is easy to implement, scales up or down, and needs little in the way of supporting infrastructure.

Decentralized biomethanation of organic waste from campuses is advantageous from a practical and technical standpoint, according to the results. Renewable energy production and soil enrichment can be achieved through the study's demonstrated effective utilization of such waste streams. Supporting sustainable waste management techniques and minimizing dependency on landfill disposal, this approach can be reproduced in similar institutional or residential situations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many Indian cities are finding it harder and harder to manage their Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), which is causing unhappiness in the neighborhood surrounding these facilities.

Protests, limited access to transportation vehicles, and opposition to processing unit construction are common ways in which residents of these locations have fought against waste management operations. These replies show how traditional methods of garbage management are causing more and more social and environmental problems. The common assumption that MSW management is entirely the purview of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) is a major problem because it discourages public participation and leads to wasteful and uninformed disposal methods. It is obvious that waste needs to be acknowledged as a recoverable resource due to the increasing rates of waste generation caused by continuous urbanization and economic development. This change can only be made possible with the help of the public, businesses, and a greater understanding of the issue, as well as treatment technologies that are both practical and financially feasible, so that they can influence legislative decisions in the future.

This study's target city is a Class-II urban center with an estimated population of around 400,000 and a daily MSW generation rate of nearly 140 metric tons, or around 0.74 kilograms per person. This is a discernible rise in trash production as compared to previous estimations. The City Municipal Corporation (CMC) currently contracts with outside companies to handle garbage collection and disposal. The garbage is hauled to a dump that is close to an nearby town.

Groundwater contamination, falling soil quality, and related health hazards are some of the environmental concerns that have developed as a result of this practice throughout time. Legal action limited additional dumping efforts and forced authorities to seek alternate solutions, as a result of the substantial opposition from local communities caused by these affects.

The city's educational institution saw these problems coming and set out to prove that MSW management could be decentralized and sustainable. The campus produces a steady stream of organic and inorganic waste due to the operation of facilities like dorms and a central eating unit, which house around 4,000 people (including staff and students). A comprehensive analysis was carried out to measure and describe the biodegradable fraction of the waste stream, as well as to assess its potential for anaerobic digestion. Laboratory, pilot, and larger operational scale experimental investigations were conducted using specially designed digestion systems; these investigations formed the basis of the present study.

The majority of municipal solid trash is organic, although there is also recyclable material and biodegradable (wet) and non-biodegradable (dry) components. This study used anaerobic digestion to create biogas and a nutrient-rich digestate from the campus's wet organic

portion. A university hostel largely replaced traditional LPG usage with the produced biogas, illustrating the practical implementation of renewable energy systems in institutional settings, and the biogas was used as a supplementary fuel. In addition, dry organic waste and digestate can be mixed to make compost, which can be used as a greener substitute for chemical fertilizers and to help enhance soil health.

An ecologically sound and decentralized methodology for recycling municipal solid waste (MSW) is presented in this research. It is possible to apply the suggested biogas production method in comparable community or institutional contexts because it is flexible. Within the context of a circular economy, it lays forth a realistic plan for responsibly managing trash, recovering energy on-site, and making the most of available resources.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Rising levels of MSW are a problem all over the world, and they're mostly caused by things like shifting consumer habits, more urbanization, and environmental concerns. Biological treatment methods, especially anaerobic digestion, are a viable choice for stabilizing waste and generating energy in many developing regions since biodegradable material makes up a considerable portion of total waste.

There are still major environmental problems caused by improper garbage collection and disposal methods. Emissions of greenhouse gases, groundwater contamination, and ecological imbalance over the long term are all results of unregulated dumping [1]. Because they lessen the need for transportation and reliance on landfill sites, decentralized waste processing systems have become more popular as a solution to these problems. Low public knowledge, insufficient segregation methods, and social hostility to waste treatment facilities are often problems that hinder their implementation, though [2].

Different demographic and socioeconomic factors contribute to different types of municipal solid waste (MSW). Anaerobic digestion is a good fit for biodegradable organic matter, which makes up a significant amount of municipal trash in India—usually between 50 and 60% [3]. Research on both a small and large scale has shown that this kind of waste can be efficiently turned into biogas. What's more, the leftover digestate can be used as an organic soil conditioner, which negates the need for artificial fertilizers [4].

Research on both decentralized and institutional systems has shown that steady functioning depends on efficient source segregation and consistent feedstock quality. Methane yield and overall system performance are further improved by using preprocessing methods and controlled feeding strategies [5]. Evidence also suggests that process parameter

optimization—including retention time, temperature, and loading rate—has a substantial impact on digestion system efficiency and dependability [6].

Studies on the financial viability of biomethanation systems on a smaller size have shown that they can reduce the need for fossil fuels, especially at larger institutions. These systems can help with circular resource utilization and lessen reliance on fuels like LPG by producing biogas locally [7]. In addition to enhancing soil qualities, using digestate as an organic amendment helps promote sustainable farming practices [8].

Anaerobic digestion processes have recently been the target of technical developments aimed at making them more efficient and stable. There has been an improvement in performance and a rise in conversion efficiency as a result of developments in reactor design, monitoring systems, and hybrid treatment procedures. These advancements are still not enough to eliminate operational concerns like odor generation, seasonal changes in waste characteristics, and feedstock composition fluctuations.

Anaerobic digestion systems, according to long-term studies, can keep performing consistently under different conditions as long as they are well-managed [11]. In order to maximize biogas generation, research has also highlighted the significance of pretreatment, moisture management, and balanced organic loading [12], [13]. Methods that are known to significantly impact methane production include regulated nutrition balance and co-digestion [14].

New strategies are being investigated in an effort to improve the efficiency of digestion and the activity of microbes. Some studies have found that designed microbial systems can stabilize digestion processes [15], while others have found that adding biochar improves methane output by encouraging microbial interactions [16].

There have been great strides, but there are still a number of obstacles that prevent widespread use. The performance of centralized systems is still impacted by inconsistent waste segregation, insufficient preprocessing, odor-related concerns, and logistical challenges. The implementation of decentralized, small-scale solutions in medium-sized cities has been mostly unexplored, although there has been an uptick in interest in them due to these restrictions, especially in institutional contexts.

Because of their well-defined borders and constant trash generation patterns, educational campuses offer an ideal regulated setting for installing such systems. Nevertheless, there are certain gaps in the current study. For example, there is a lack of information about the

characteristics of institutional waste in tier-2 cities, biogas production is not adequately integrated with composting techniques, and stakeholders are not well-informed or involved.

This research aims to fill that gap by methodically evaluating and transforming moist organic waste from a university or college campus. Using waste segregation, biogas production, and nutrient recovery, it seeks to create a decentralized waste-to-energy model that is both practical and scalable.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following goals are pursued by the research:

1. To ascertain the amount and dispersion of organic waste (both wet and dry) produced on campus.
2. To determine whether wet organic waste is suitable for anaerobic digestion by analyzing its physicochemical properties.
3. Developing and executing biogas production systems at various operating scales, such as pilot, full-scale, and laboratory versions.
4. To find out whether biogas can replace Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in campus buildings by making it from organic waste.
5. Making enhanced organic manure using digestion leftovers and dry organic waste is goal number five.
6. To create a model for decentralized waste management that works in both urban and institutional settings.
7. To get everyone involved in the process of waste segregation and management thinking about how to make a difference.

4. WORKING: Two-Stage Floating Drum Continuous-Type Biogas Production Plant

Design and installation of a 6-meter-squared (m^3) two-stage floating-drum continuous biogas production unit was carried out on campus. The system is made up of a gas holding measuring 1 m^3 and a primary digester measuring 5 m^3 . As an example of the practical transformation of organic waste into an energy source, the biogas that is currently produced is utilized in cooking. In Fig. 2 we can see the system installed on a field scale.

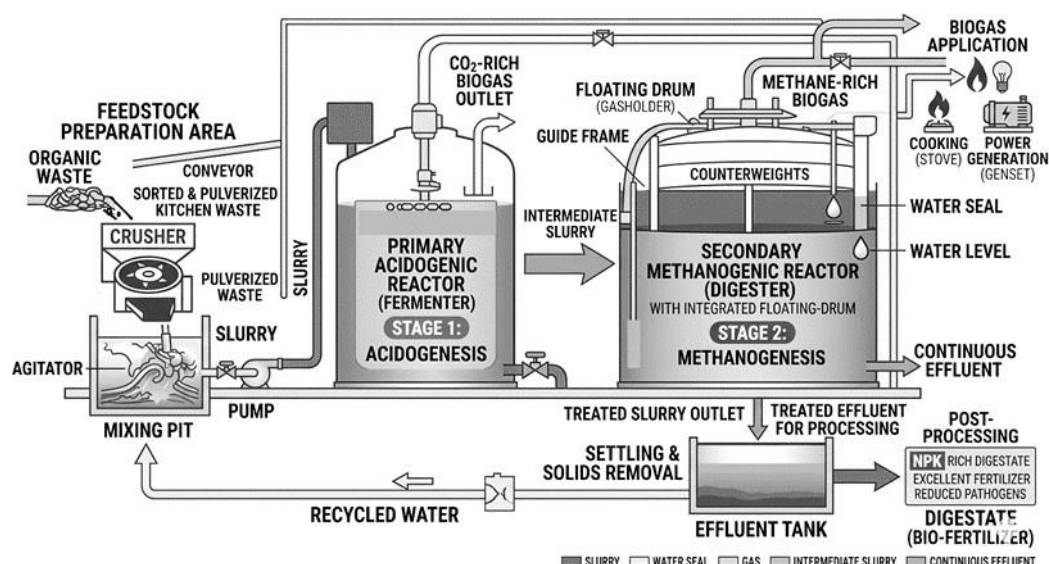


Fig. 2. Biogasplantfororganicfoodscrapswithtwostagesoffloatingdrums that are continuously operated.

With this setup, we hope to increase the biogas production efficiency from food scraps while keeping everything running smoothly. For organic compounds with a high degradation potential, the system's ability to partition digestion into two distinct phases improves control over biological responses.

Preparation of feedstock is the first step in the operation. The first step in recycling food scraps is to remove any non-biodegradable materials from the trash. To make it easier for microbes to reach, the substance is shred or otherwise reduced in size. For easy digestion and flow, a consistent slurry is made by adding water or recycled liquid and keeping the solids content between 8 and 12 percent. To ensure that no fats or oils get in the way, a grease removal unit is incorporated into the system.

The first reactor is used for hydrolysis and acid generation, and it is fed the prepared slurry. At this point, the organic molecules have been reduced to their most basic components, including alcohols, volatile fatty acids, and gases like carbon dioxide and hydrogen. Rapid organic matter decomposition is achieved in this reactor due to its mildly acidic environment and relatively short retention time, usually ranging from 2 to 4 days.

The second reactor, which is in charge of methane generation, then receives the partially processed slurry. Microorganisms transform intermediate products into biogas, which is high in methane, at this step. In order to guarantee full digestion and consistent performance, the conditions are kept close to neutral pH, typically ranging from 6.8 to 8.2. The retention period is extended to around 20 to 30 days.

The gas storage unit is a movable drum that is positioned above the second reactor. The rising of the

drum during biogas generation serves to both keep the gas pressure constant and give a straightforward indication of gas production. You can put the collected gas to use for heating, cooking, or anything else that requires energy.

Regular addition of new slurry during continuous operation forces an equivalent amount of treated effluent out of the system. The solid and liquid components of this effluent may be separated, and it includes significant nutrients. The chunky part can be turned into organic manure, and the liquid part can be used as fertilizer or recycled back into the system.

Process control and efficiency are both enhanced by the two-stage setup as compared to the single-stage alternatives. Reducing the likelihood of process imbalance, especially acid buildup, and supporting steady microbial activity, is possible by separating the initial breakdown phase from methane synthesis. This leads to more stable operation over time, increased loading capacity, and improved gas yield.

The two-stage system is superior to the single-stage alternatives in terms of process control and efficiency. By separating the initial breakdown phase from methane synthesis, the likelihood of process imbalance, particularly acid buildup, can be reduced while simultaneously supporting steady microbial activity. A more consistent performance, higher loading capacity, and enhanced gas yield are the results.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

i) Quantification and Segregation

Over the course of two weeks, the campus's municipal solid waste was tracked and documented. The hostels, the main dining hall, and the academic buildings were among the primary locations for the daily trash collection. According to the data, the daily average trash production was approximately 300 kg.

The gathered materials were primarily classified as either wet organic, dry organic, or recyclable. According to the data, dry organic matter and recyclables made up much smaller portions of the overall waste stream compared to biodegradable (wet) trash. This trend is frequently seen in institutional settings, when there is a high volume of food waste from both cooking and eating.

In Table 1 you can see the breakdown of each category's makeup along with its percentage distribution. Based on the findings, biological treatment methods like composting and biomethanation are well-suited to organic waste.

The efficiency of downstream processing was greatly enhanced by segregation at the production site. Waste sorting improved the suitability of organic materials for anaerobic

digestion and decreased contamination by separating wet and dry waste. The former could then be sent to composting, while the latter might be used for other purposes. Overall, this method improved operating efficiency and resource recovery.

These findings highlight the significance of institutionalized segregation policies, which have a direct impact on the efficiency of waste treatment systems and lead to longer-term, better results from waste management.

Table 1 illustrates the composition of MSW obtained during the study period.

MSW Constituents	Quantity Kgs	Composition %
Wet Organics (WO)	177	59.0
Dry Organics (DO)	69	23.0
Papers	26	8.6
Plastics	17	5.7
Glass/Metallic's	05	1.7
Others	06	2.0
Total	300	100

ii) Analysis of Organic Wastes

Hostels, the cafeteria, and other academic departments were among the many sites on campus where samples of food-based organic waste and vegetable residues were gathered. Using standard laboratory procedures, we were able to determine the physical and chemical properties of these materials.

Determined by the proximate analysis were factors like moisture content, volatile matter, ash, and fixed carbon. When determining the material's biodegradability, these characteristics are crucial. Typically, anaerobic digestion and biogas production are better suited to materials with higher moisture levels and a bigger proportion of volatile matter.

Also, final analysis was used to determine the elemental composition, which includes carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, sulfur, and oxygen. Waste energy potential and biomethanation process compatibility can be better estimated with this data. One of the most important factors in sustaining steady microbial activity and guaranteeing effective digestion is the carbon-to-nitrogen ratio.

Tables 2 and 3 describe the average outcomes of these analyses. These facts lend credence to the organic waste's assessment as a viable feedstock for biogas production and shed light on its composition.

Table-2 Proximate Analysis of Organic wastes.

Waste Item	Moisture contents %	Organic solids %	Volatile Organics %	Ash content	Organic carbon %
Brinjal	42	58	98.3	1.7	54.6
Cabbage	46	54	98.2	1.8	54.3
Carrot	41	59	96.6	3.4	53.7
Tomato	66	34	95.2	1.6	55.7
Cucumber	46	54	98.2	1.8	54.2
Spent Tea powder	44	56	98.1	1.9	55.7
Dry Leaves	12	88	98.5	1.5	54.9

Table-3 Ultimate analysis of Organic wastes.

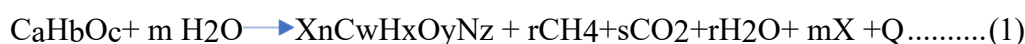
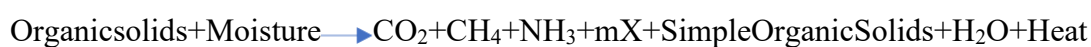
Type of Waste	Percent by Weight (Dry Basis)					
	C	H	O	N	S	Ash
Food Waste	49	6.2	37.7	2.4	0.4	4.3
Paper (Mixed)	43.4	5.6	44.4	0.4	0.2	5.9
Fruit Wastes	48.2	6.3	40.1	1.3	0.2	3.9
Dry Leaves	52.1	6.1	30.2	7.1	0.1	4.4

iii) Biomethanation Studies

In biomethanation, anaerobic microbes transform biodegradable organic waste into biogas. When there is enough moisture present, naturally occurring microbes break down the wet organic part of MSW in an oxygen-free environment.

There are several linked biological processes that contribute to the breakdown of organic matter. Hydrolysis first breaks down complex compounds into simpler soluble substances. This includes carbohydrates, proteins, and lipids. In the acidogenesis stage, these products are transformed into organic acids, alcohols, and gases. The process of acetogenesis then proceeds to further convert the intermediate compounds into less complex molecules like acetic acid, hydrogen, and carbon dioxide. Biogas is the end product of this process, which begins with these intermediates and ends with methane and carbon dioxide converted by methanogenic microbes.

In a series of steps, organic waste can be stabilized and turned into a usable fuel gas through this conversion process. An overarching biochemical equation that describes the conversion of organic materials into biogas is as follows:



As the reaction (1) is of biochemical nature, some of the variables which influence the reaction are

presented discussed

Biogas Generation

Decomposition of biodegradable organic matter in an oxygen-free environment with sufficient moisture results in the formation of biogas. Microbial activity drives this transition, which is dependent on hydraulic retention period, pH, organic solids content, and moisture level. Figure 3 shows the overall pattern of gas production that is observed during digestion.

The total solids in the system are reduced as digestion advances because microbes break down the feedstock's organic content. Since the microbial populations need time to adjust to the substrate, gas output is minimal initially. The microorganisms get more active and make better contact with the organic waste as the process continues, which increases metabolic activity and, in turn, biogas output. At this stage, gas generation is usually at its highest.

Gas output gradually decreases after reaching the maximum production level. The loss of organic compounds that break down easily is the primary cause of this decline. A decrease in pH from near-neutral circumstances, caused by the accumulation of intermediate metabolites like volatile fatty acids, might impact the performance of microbes.

Over the course of one month, we tracked biogas production and associated metrics. Figure 3(a)–(c) show that the trends that were noticed are in line with what one would expect from anaerobic digestion systems.

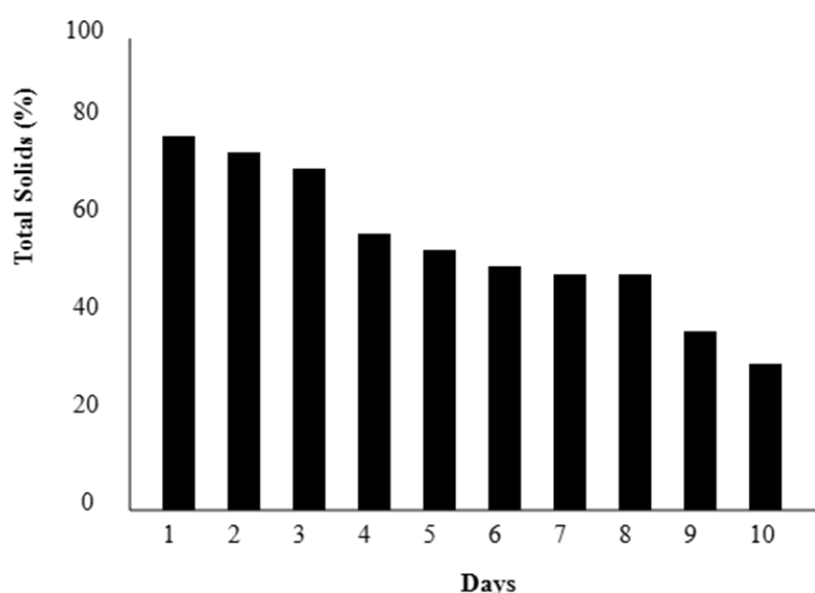


Fig.3(a). Variation of total solids content during biomethanation over time (days).

The total solids content fluctuated during a 10-day period in Fig. 3(a) as the biomethanation process progressed. Degradation of organic matter is evident from the gradual

drop in total solids, which goes from 85% on Day 1 to 52% by Day 10. As a result of increased microbiological activity and active digestion, the decrease is most pronounced between days 3 and 6. The successful transformation of organic solids into biogas and other liquid by-products is shown by this trend.

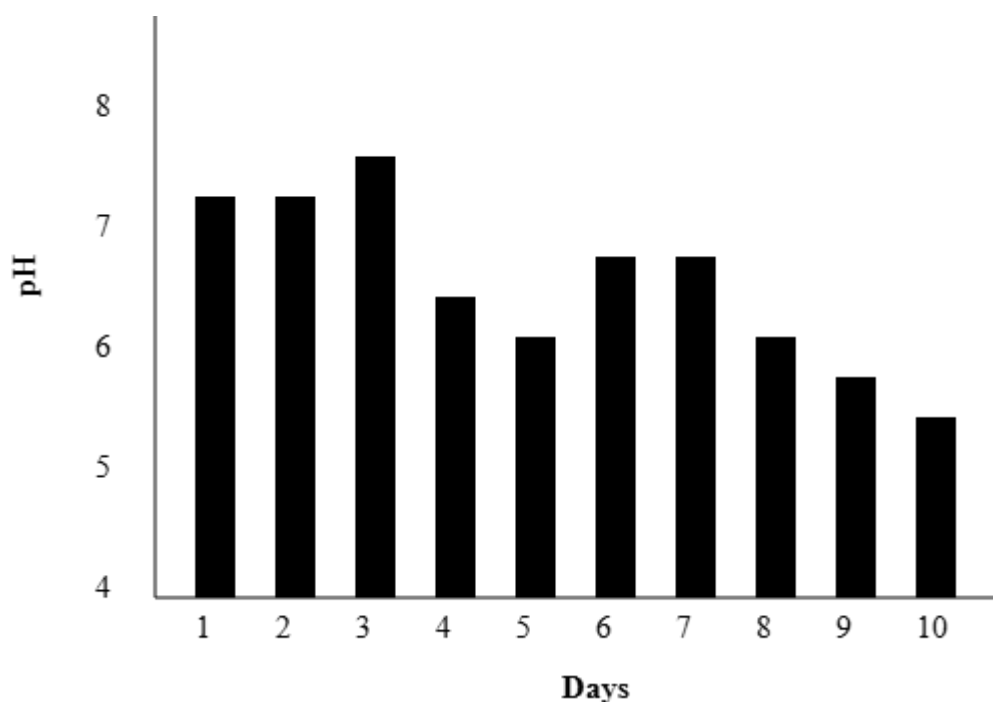


Fig.3(a). Variation of pH over time (days).

Digestion causes a change in pH , as seen in Fig. 3(b). The initial stage is characterized by microbial activity because the pH is nearly neutral (about 7.0-7.5). Since volatile fatty acids tend to accumulate during the process, the pH drops to acidic levels (around 5.0-5.5) as it goes along. This pattern lines up with the distinct stages of anaerobic digestion, more specifically acidogenesis and methanogenesis, and highlights the need of pH regulation in sustaining effective biogas generation.

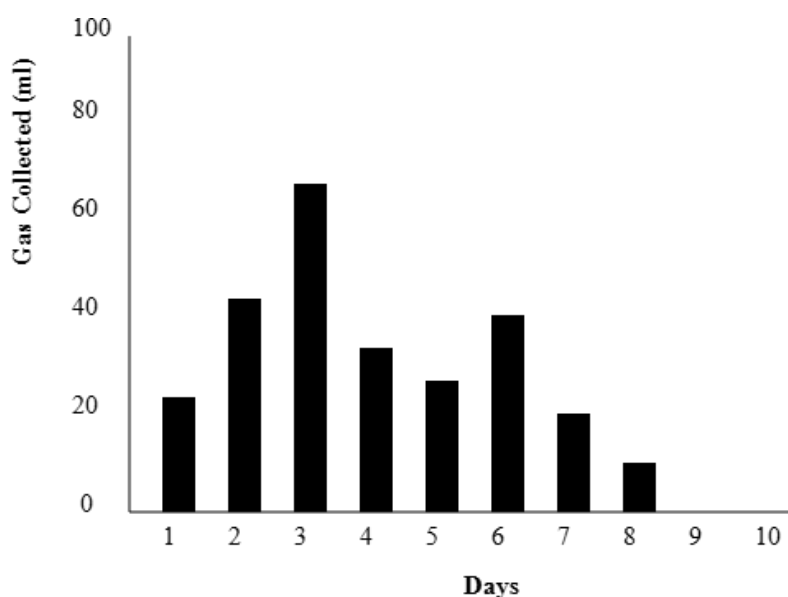


Fig.3(c).Variationofgasgenerationwithrespecttotime(days).

As seen in Fig. 3(c), the biomethanation process results in the daily production of biogas. Enhanced microbial activity and efficient substrate consumption are shown by the quick increase in gas generation in the initial phase, which reaches a maximum of roughly 90 ml around Day 3. After this peak, biogas production starts to fall as organic matter that can be biodegraded is exhausted and less favorable conditions, like a lower pH, come into play. The digestion process is complete when gas production becomes insignificant by Days 9 and 10. Total solids reduction, pH fluctuation, and biogas generation are clearly interrelated when Fig. 3(a), (b), and (c) are interpreted together. In the beginning, when the pH is close to neutral and the microbes are at their most active, the gas production peaks. On the other hand, biogas production drops as acidic conditions set in later on, which hinders methanogenic activity.

ii) Pretreatment of Feed Slurry

An evaluation of the effect of thermal pretreatment on the performance of biogas production was conducted on the feed slurry. Results from the experiments show that biogas production is significantly greater from pretreated feedstock than from untreated slurry.

In order to increase the surface area that microbes can work with, heat pretreatment is used to break down organic matter's complex cellulosic and lignocellulosic components. Because microorganisms are now able to more easily reach the substrate, the rate of biogas generation has increased thanks to this structural change.

Biogas production from treated and untreated slurry is shown in Fig. 4, which is a

comparative analysis. As a consequence of enhanced biodegradability and quicker microbial activity, the results demonstrate that the pretreated slurry reaches a gas production peak earlier and at a greater level.

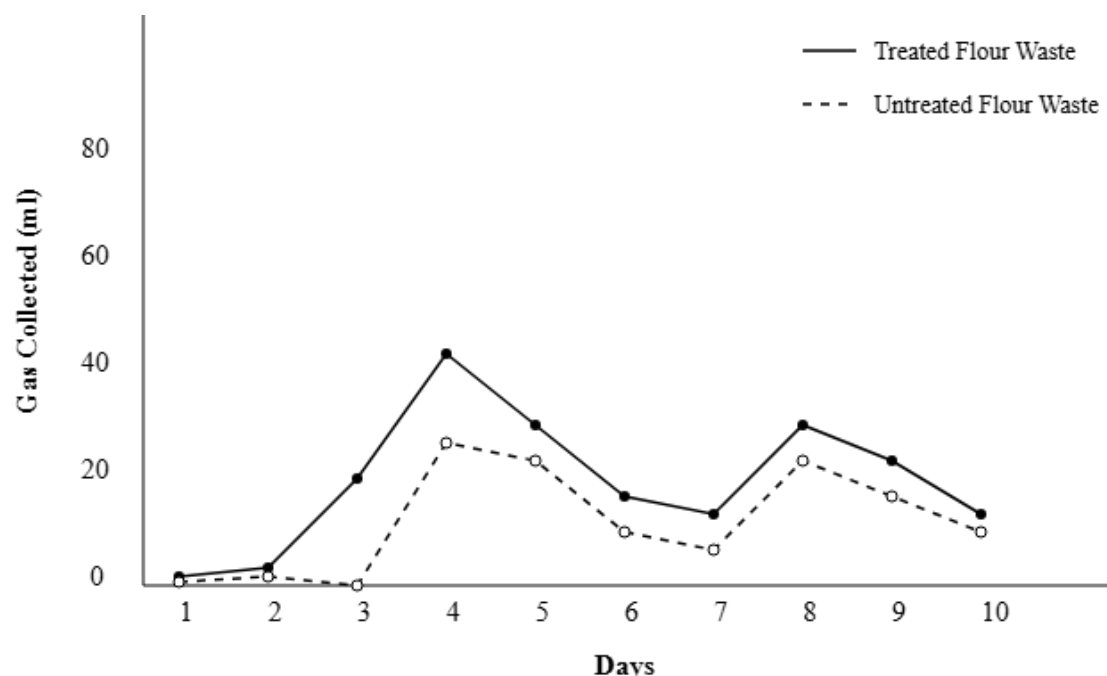


Fig.4 Effect of Pretreatment of feed slurry.

Thermal pretreatment greatly improves anaerobic digestion efficiency, which in turn increases biogas yield, as these observations show.

iii) Feed Slurry Composition

Before being used in biomethanation tests, wet organic waste from several sources on campus, such as vegetable leftovers, cooked rice, sambar, tea leaves, and chapatti, was mixed with water in varying proportions and homogenized. Figure 5 shows the typical results of these research.

The microbiome adapted to the reactor's anaerobic conditions during an initial lag phase that lasted around two to three days. After the initial acclimation period, the microbes got to work, slowly breaking down organic materials and producing more biogas.

The system performance was greatly affected by the solids to water ratio throughout digestion. This was due to the fact that it affected substrate availability, microbial interaction, and overall process dynamics. Degradation efficiency and gas yield were both improved when there was enough moisture content because microorganisms were able to come into better contact with the substrate.

At an ideal stage of digestion, biogas production peaked, and then it dropped as the easily biodegradable organic matter was depleted. With a peak production at around seven days after retention, the organic waste/water mixture showed the greatest biogas output among the various slurry compositions tested.

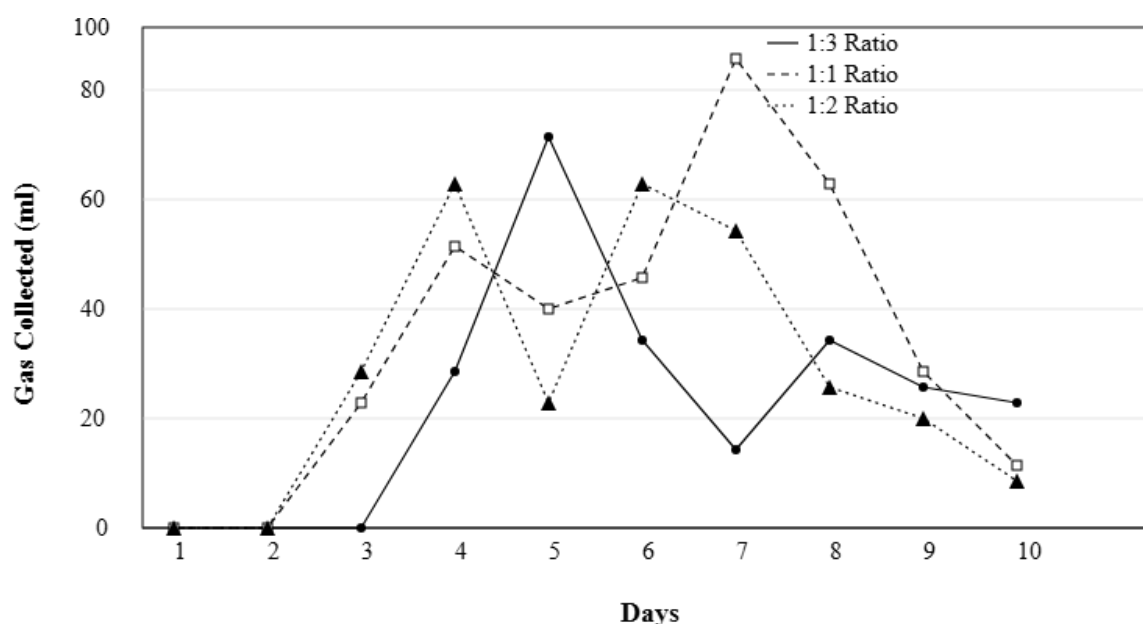


Fig.5: Effect of Solid to Water content on Biogas Generation.

iv) Composition of Biogas

Because anaerobic digestion involves various biochemical routes, the composition of biogas, which mostly consists of CH_4 and CO_2 , changes over time. There is a relatively high quantity of carbon dioxide in the beginning of the process because acidogenic reactions are the most common.

The activity of methanogenic microbes increases during digestion, which in turn increases methane formation and the CH_4 content of the biogas, which rises gradually. Similarly, when methanogenesis takes over as the primary metabolic process, the fraction of CO_2 either stays the same or goes down.

The change from an anaerobic digestion's acidogenic to methanogenic phases is reflected in this gas composition fluctuation. Tabulated in Table 4 are the noted shifts in carbon dioxide and methane concentrations over time.

Table-4: Variation of Biogas composition.

Constituents	Composition of Biogas (% Vol)					
	3 Days	5 Days	10 Days	15 Days	20 Days	25 Days
CO ₂	28.2	25.4	23.4	19.8	18.8	16.6
O ₂	11.8	11.6	11.2	11.4	11.8	11.6
Moisture	4%	6%	8%	8%	9%	8%
CH ₄	56	57	57.4	61.8	61.4	63.8

v) Field Studies

A two-stage floating-drum continuous biomethanation plant with a total capacity of 6 m³ was constructed and installed on campus based on the outcomes of laboratory-scale studies.

The plant consists of a 5 m³ digester and a 1 m³ gas container. Presently, the biogas generated by this system is used for cooking, which proves that the conversion of MSW into usable energy is feasible. Figure 2 shows a representational depiction of the biomethanation plant's field-scale installation.

vi) Utilization of Bio-Slurry

Currently, there is a designated storage tank where the bio-slurry that is produced by the biomethanation system is kept for future use. The next step in turning this nutrient-rich digestate into organic manure is co-composting it with the dry organic portion of the MSW produced on campus.

The resultant bio-manure is a great substitute for chemical fertilizers and is used to keep the campus's lawns and landscaping in good condition. Applying it helps create a "Green Campus" by increasing soil fertility, strengthening soil structure, and bolstering sustainable land management techniques.

In addition to its obvious practical uses, the system also highlights the efficacy of waste-to-energy and waste-to-manure conversion technologies. Sustainable methods of managing urban garbage and recovering resources can be better understood and implemented with the help of this platform, which is great for raising public and stakeholder awareness.

7. CONCLUSION

Proper quantification, source segregation, and biomethanation treatment of biodegradable waste allow for optimal management of municipal solid waste, according to the study. Segregation during generation is an important part of this process because it allows for the recovery of valuable products like biogas and organic manure and has a direct impact on the efficiency of the processing that follows.

A significant result of this effort is the effective implementation of a campus-wide integrated

waste management strategy. This system uses biogas, a byproduct of wet organic waste treated with anaerobic digestion, to supplement the fuel supply rather than relying on liquefied petroleum gas. When added to dry organic waste, the residual digestate undergoes additional processing into compost, which enhances nutrient quality and facilitates the production of enriched bio-manure that is well-suited for use in landscaping and agriculture. By recycling materials into usable energy and soil amendments, this method mimics a closed-loop system for resource utilization.

The results also show how important it is to have stakeholders' help and work together for these systems to work. With proper implementation, decentralized waste treatment units can alleviate landfill overflow, minimize environmental impacts, and provide real-world examples for education and training.

In conclusion, this study's campus-based paradigm provides a workable and flexible approach to MSW management. Its capacity to recover resources, ease of use, and scalability make it a good fit for more sustainable waste management techniques in institutional, urban, and semi-urban areas.

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