The Social Dimension of Zero Waste Policy

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Abstract

Preventing waste generation, using resources efficiently, and promoting sustainable consumption habits are becoming increasingly important in addressing climate change and environmental challenges. In this context, zero waste policies offer technical and administrative solutions aimed at reducing waste and recovering resources. However, the success of these policies depends not only on technological infrastructure but also on changes in individual and societal behaviour.

This study examines zero waste policy from the perspective of environmental sociology, discussing the social causes of waste generation and approaches to promoting sustainable consumption behaviour.

The study explores the relationships between consumption habits, energy use, and waste generation, considering the potential effects of different patterns of social behaviour on achieving zero waste objectives.

Within this framework, a broad spectrum of social behaviours is examined, ranging from lifestyles based on low consumption and limited resource use to behavioural patterns characterised by intensive consumption and the pursuit of continuous economic growth.

The central question addressed by the study is how, and under what social conditions, consumption behaviours that contribute to environmental problems can be transformed. Accordingly, the study emphasises that zero waste policies should not be limited to waste collection, separation, and recycling but should also be considered in relation to consumption culture, social values, and lifestyles.

The study highlights the importance of complementing solutions developed in engineering, economics, and technology with perspectives offered by the social sciences in addressing the climate crisis.

Strengthening public acceptance of zero waste policies and achieving lasting behavioural change are regarded as essential components of efforts to achieve environmental sustainability objectives.

Keywords: Zero waste, environmental sociology, social behaviour, sustainable consumption, climate change.

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