



Electronic Waste Management

Why in News

Citing huge gaps in compliance of **electronic waste-management rules**, the [National Green Tribunal](#) (NGT) has recently ordered that scientific disposal of **e-waste** should be ensured as per rules.

- The direction has been issued to **central** and all **state pollution control boards**.

E-Waste

- E-Waste is short for Electronic-Waste and the term is used to describe old, end-of-life or **discarded electronic appliances**. It includes their components, consumables, parts and spares.
- It is categorised into 21 types under **two broad categories**:
 - Information technology and communication equipment.
 - Consumer electrical and electronics.
- **Laws to manage e-waste have been in place in India since 2011**, mandating that only authorised dismantlers and recyclers collect e-waste. **E-waste (Management) Rules, 2016** was enacted in 2017.
- **India's first e-waste clinic** for segregating, processing and disposal of waste from household and commercial units has been set-up in **Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh**.

Key Points

- **E-waste Generation in India:**
 - According to the [Central Pollution Control Board](#) (CPCB), India generated more than **10 lakh tonnes of e-waste in 2019-20**, an increase from **7 lakh tonnes in 2017-18**. Against this, the **e-waste dismantling capacity** has not been increased from **7.82 lakh tonnes** since 2017-18.
 - In 2018, the Ministry of Environment had told the tribunal that **95% of e-waste** in India is **recycled by the informal sector** and **scrap dealers unscientifically dispose of it** by burning or dissolving it in acids.
- **NGT's Directions:**
 - **Further steps should be taken for scientific enforcement of E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 (EWMR)** in the light of the reports of the CPCB.
 - It **noted gaps in collection targets**, as the amount of e-waste collected in 2018-19 was 78,000 tonnes against a target of 1.54 lakh tonnes. There are **clear governance deficits** on the subject.
 - The CPCB **may consider steps for compliance of Rule 16 requiring reduction in the use of Hazardous substances** in the manufacture of electrical and electronic equipment and their components or consumables or parts or spares.

- It took note that **a large number of accidents take place in residential areas on account of unscientific handling of e-waste.** This needs special attention for constant vigilance in such hotspots. This also requires **review and updation of siting norms for e-waste by the CPCB** which may be done within three months.
- All the **state pollution control boards need to identify the hotspots** by constant vigil and to coordinate with the District Administration at local levels to prevent damage to the environment and public health and meaningful enforcement of rule of law.

E-Waste Management Rules, 2016

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the **E-Waste Management Rules, 2016** in supersession of the **E-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011.**
- Over 21 products (Schedule-I) were included under the purview of the rule. It included **Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) and other mercury containing lamps,** as well as other such equipment.
- For the first time, the rules brought the **producers under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), along with targets.** Producers have been made responsible for the collection of E-waste and for its exchange.
- Various producers can have a separate **Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO)** and ensure collection of E-waste, as well as its disposal in an environmentally sound manner.
- **Deposit Refund Scheme** has been introduced as an additional economic instrument wherein the producer charges an additional amount as a deposit at the time of sale of the electrical and electronic equipment and returns it to the consumer along with interest when the end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment is returned.
- The role of **State Governments has been also introduced** to ensure safety, health and skill development of the workers involved in dismantling and recycling operations.
- A provision of **penalty for violation of rules** has also been introduced.
- **Urban Local Bodies** (Municipal Committee/Council/Corporation) have been assigned the duty to collect and channelize the **orphan products to authorized dismantlers or recyclers.**
- Allocation of **proper space to existing and upcoming industrial units for e-waste dismantling and recycling.**

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