



# E-Waste Generation

## Why in News

**International E-Waste Day** has been observed on **14<sup>th</sup> October** since 2018.

- The aim of the day is **to raise awareness** about the **millions of tonnes of e-waste generated worldwide** each year, which has a negative impact on the environment and natural resources.
- Earlier this year, the Principal Bench of [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\) issued directions](#) for the implementation of [E-Waste \(Management\) Rules, 2016](#).

## International E-Waste Day

- This year's International E-Waste Day highlights the **crucial role each of us play in making e-product circularity a reality**.
- According to the [United Nations](#), by 2021, **each person on the planet would produce an average of 7.6 kg of e-waste**, resulting in a global total of 57.4 million tonnes of e-waste.
- **Only 17.4% of this electronic garbage**, which contains a combination of hazardous compounds and valuable materials, will be appropriately collected, processed, and recycled.

## Key Points

- **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**.
  - Originally, the [Basel Convention](#) (1992) did not mention e-waste but later it addressed the issues of e-waste in 2006 (COP8).
    - The **Nairobi Declaration** was adopted at COP9 of the **Basel Convention on the Control of the Trans-boundary Movement of Hazardous Waste**. It aimed at creating innovative solutions for the environmentally sound management of electronic wastes.
- **E-waste Generation:**

- This year's **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)** will total about **57.4 million tonnes (MT)** and will be **greater than the weight of the Great Wall of China**, Earth's heaviest artificial object.
- 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.

#### ▪ **Challenges Related to Management of E-Waste in India:**

##### ◦ **Less Involvement of People:**

- A **key factor in used electronic devices not being given for recycling** was because consumers themselves did not do so.

- However, in recent years, countries around the world have been attempting to pass effective '**right to repair**' laws.

##### ◦ **Involvement of Child Labor:**

- In India, about 4.5 lakh child laborers in the age group of 10-14 are observed to be engaged in various E-waste activities and that too without adequate protection and safeguards in various yards and recycling workshops.

##### ◦ **Ineffective Legislation:**

- There is absence of any public information on most **State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/PCC** websites.

##### ◦ **Health hazards:**

- E-waste **contains over 1,000 toxic materials**, which contaminate soil and groundwater.

##### ◦ **Lack of incentive schemes:**

- **No clear guidelines are there** for the unorganized sector to handle E-waste.
- Also, no incentives are mentioned to lure people engaged to adopt a formal path for handling E-waste.

##### ◦ **E-waste Imports:**

- Cross-border flow of waste equipment into India- 80% of E-waste in developed countries meant for recycling is sent to developing countries such as India, China, Ghana and Nigeria.

##### ◦ **Reluctance of Authorities' involved:**

- **Lack of coordination between various authorities** responsible for E-waste management and disposal including the non-involvement of municipalities.

##### ◦ **Security Implications:**

- End of life computers often contain sensitive personal information and bank account details which, if not deleted leave opportunity for fraud.

## **Way Forward**

- There are various startups and companies in India that have now started to collect and recycle electronic waste. We need **better implementation methodologies** and **inclusion policies** that provide accommodation and validation for the informal sector to step up and help us meet our recycling targets in an environmentally sound manner.
- Also, successfully raising collection rates required every actor to be involved, including consumers.

**Source: DTE**

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