Topic: Electronic –waste management in the National Capital Region

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Abstract

The generation of e-waste has become a big problem which is faced by the developed and developing countries since the past few decades. E-waste is one of the hazardous waste which requires special and separate handling in terms of management. Unsafe recycling and disposal of e-waste is taking place in the poor countries like China and India on a very large scale. The rich nations export their second hand electronic devices in the name of charity in order to re-burden their trash while as developing or poor nations import the discarded electronic-products so as to recover the precious metals out of the e-waste components. This has further aggravated the problem as the developing nations have to manage the huge volume of domestic e-waste generated and the e-waste imported from other nations. India is one of those countries which is facing the problem at large. Since this problem has become very serious in Delhi metropolitan and its region, therefore, the present study proposes to assess the magnitude of e-waste generated and its composition, recycling and disposal in the National Capital Region (NCR).

NCR being highly developed and urbanized has led to the generation of huge quantities of e-waste from the consumption of key e-device i.e. personal computers, televisions and mobile phones. E-waste generation in the NCR has increased from 21 thousand tonns in

1991 to 67 thousand tonns in 2001 and 148 thousand tonns in 2010. With the growing population and their increasing needs for electronic products, it is projected that e- waste is also going to increase in the coming years at an alarming rate. And this waste finally ends up in the hands of recyclers at the informal recycling yards. But improper recycling has created unhygienic environmental conditions near the recycling yards. The availability of cheap labour to extract precious metals from discarded electronic items has flourished big business of informal recycling in the region. The migrated labour who lives mostly in the nearby slums of metro cities perform this hazardous work without knowing the ill-effects of it. If the problem is not addressed quickly and managed scientifically it may pose threat not only to the environment of these cities but also to their immediate surroundings resulting in environment and health hazards of the people.