



The Energy and Resources Institute

## **TERI research paper on e-waste management receives international recognition**

*Study finds 12-26 per cent Delhiites replace their major electronic goods like refrigerators, food processors, computers and music systems within the first three years of purchase, before the completion of the appliance's useful life.*

**New Delhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2015:** A research paper on the e-waste awareness and management by TERI experts Dr Suneel Pandey, Mr Sumit Sharma and Ms Swati Kwatra (Assistant Professor, Lady Irwin College and research scholar TERI University) has received international acclaim as Outstanding Paper in the 2015 Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence given by the journal '*Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*'.

The paper titled '*Understanding public knowledge and awareness on e-waste in an urban setting in India: A case study for Delhi*' aimed to study the findings that could help in designing customized awareness programmes for addressing this concern more effectively. It is important as consumers of electronic products ultimately become the generators of e-waste in a community.

The survey conducted in Delhi revealed that significant fraction of middle-class population is still unaware of the issue; however, on getting the information they were able to link the impacts of improper management of e-waste with detrimental health outcomes. However, despite some awareness about the issue, most respondents were totally unaware about correct ways of its recycling and management.

Dr Suneel Pandey, Associate Director, Green Growth and Resource Efficiency Division, commented on the issue by saying, "E-waste is one of fastest growing waste streams for India and the concern is not only because of high expected, high penetration and high obsolescence, but also variety of toxic chemicals used therein. Hence, its proper management requires awareness at all levels of stakeholders."

Mr Sumit Sharma, Fellow, Earth Science and Climate Change Division, stressed on the need for enhanced durability of the products for controlling the generation of e-waste and extended producer responsibility for its better management.

Ms Swati Kwatra, Principal Author of the research paper, stated that India's economy is growing and so is the purchasing power of its young professionals. Latest electronic gadgets are becoming one of their essential lifestyle needs. However, most of them don't know what to do with the old used gadgets. Moreover, they do not connect the link between fast obsolescence of e-products with environmental and health impacts. It is essential to understand this link and make ourselves a responsible buyer.

### **Key findings:**

- An important finding of the study was that 12-26 per cent people replace their major electronic goods like refrigerators, food processors, personal computers and music systems within the first three years of purchase. Discarding products within their periods of useful lives leads to enhanced generation of e-wastes. Along with e-waste generation, this also puts additional stress over the resources used for manufacturing of these products.
- The survey revealed the willingness of users to pay extra cost for proper management of e-waste provided there is cost sharing between consumers and producers.
- This also raises an important aspect of extended producer responsibility (EPR). EPR puts additional responsibility and onus on the manufacturer of the product to not only produce durable quality of products but also take back the obsolete products and manage the e-waste. This also means that the manufacturers will have to use recyclable material in manufacturing of new products for economic management of e-waste at the later stage. In the Indian context it would be a challenge to implement the concept of EPR, especially with the active informal sector. The respondents quite adequately put equal responsibilities on the government, consumers and producers for effective e-waste management.

### **Methodology:**

The paper presents the results of a questionnaire survey-based study. Analysis of the data reveals that the knowledge on the issue of e-waste is minimal and requires massive awareness drives for sensitization. A limited random survey was conducted with a sample size of 400 individuals in Delhi from middle class belonging to different educational backgrounds and professions. Personal interview method was used to collect in-depth information related to the issues of e-waste and its management. The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended questions.

To know more: <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/MEQ-12-2013-0139>

### **ABOUT TERI:**

TERI is an independent, not-for-profit research institute focused on energy, environment, and sustainable development and devoted to efficient and sustainable use of natural resources. Since its inception in 1974, TERI has emerged as an institution of excellence for its path-breaking research, and is a global brand widely respected by political leaders, policy makers, corporate entities as well as the civil society at large.

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