

# **Global E-Waste Monitor Report 2017**

This week an important report from the environment and ecological perspective has been released. The significance of the report can be gauged from the fact that it is released from the support of United Nations. The report is titled - 'Global E-Waste Monitor 2017'.

## **About the Report**

The Global E-Waste Report is published from time to time with no specific period by the collaboration of three bodies - International Telecommunication Union, United Nations University and International Solid Waste Association.

International Telecommunication Union was originally called the International Telegraphy Union. It is a specialised agency of the United Nations responsible for information and communication technologies. It was formed in May 1865 with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

United Nations University was established in 1973 and is the academic and research arm of the United Nations. It is headquartered at Shibuya, Tokyo Japan with diplomatic status as a UN institution. Since 2010 the United Nations General Assembly has granted it authority to issue degrees.

The International Solid Waste Association is a professional non-governmental organisation with focus on Sustainable Waste Management. It is located in Vienna Austria.

## **What is E-Waste?**

There are numerous definitions of E-Waste. One of the definition given by STEP Initiative in 2014 correlates the E-Waste to the intention of the owner to use it. Those electrical and electronic wastes which have been discarded by the owner without any intention to reuse it referred to as E-Waste.

## **Types of E-Waste**

The report classify the e-waste into 6 categories. The categories are classified according to lifetime profile of the waste i.e. quantity, economic value and impact of each type of waste.

Firstly, Temperature and Exchange Equipment that include cooling and freezing equipment like refrigerators, freezers, air conditioners, heat pumps etc.

Secondly, there are montors and screens of televisions, laptops, computer monitors among others.

The third category is lamps like fluorescent lamps, high intensity discharge lamps and LED Lamps.

Large equipment like washing machines, cloth dryers, large printing machines etc. forms the fourth category.

Small Equipment, the fifth category includes discarded toasters, microwaves, calculators, radio sets, video cameras etc.

And lastly, GPS, routers, telephones, cellphones form the small IT and telecommunication equipment segment of e-waste.

### **Important Highlights of the Report**

The executive summary of the report highlights that the production of e-waste is on a rise. In the year 2016 the world produced 44.7 million metric tonnes of e-waste which amounts to 6.1 kilogram per capita. This is close to 4500 Eiffel towers per year.

Further, the report cites that great growth speed of global information society characterised by increased user base, innovation and socio-economic development are contributing to increased ICT uptake and shorter replacement cycles consequently flooding mother earth with unwanted e-waste.

Of the total e-waste produced, only 20% i.e. 8.9 million metric tonnes is documented facilitating its safe disposal. Rest is undocumented.

Asia has emerged as the largest producer of e-waste thanks to ever burgeoning population and users of electronic and electrical items in this continent. The highest rate of per-capita production for Asia is quite disturbing because it is home to two of the most populated countries of the world – India and China.

The lack of initiative in the global governments can be seen from the fact that only 41% of the countries have a legislation dealing with e-waste which is less than 25% of total governments.

Lack of recycling of e-waste results in to loss of potential raw materials that can be obtained from recycling. In 2016 this loss was estimated at 55 billion US Dollar which is more than total GDP of many countries.

### **Future Looks Grim Too**

The future of E-Waste problem looks grim too. There is estimated rise in both the total e-waste production as well as e-waste per capita. The anticipated total e-waste production in 2021 is estimated at 52.2 million metric tonnes, a rise of 7.5 million metric tonnes from present production quantity. The per capita production will also increase by 0.7 kilogram per inhabitant to 6.8 kilogram per inhabitant.

There is only 20% documented recycling of the waste product and 35.8 million metric tonnes or 80% of the total e-waste goes into residual waste which is either dumped, traded or

recycled under inferior conditions. This also results into potential loss of recyclable raw materials which amounted to US \$ 55 billion for the year 2015, much higher than the GDPs of many individual nations.

The 49 countries of Asia have been the largest producer of e-waste and also largest per-capita producer of e-waste unitedly. There are 4.4 billion inhabitants and each inhabitant produces 4.2 kilogram of e-waste annually. Asia accounts for 40.7% of total E-waste and has a poor collection rate of meagre 15%.

The world has acknowledged the menace of e-waste and the awareness is spreading. Compared to the year 2014, 12% more countries have enacted legislation against e-waste. In 2014 there were 61 such countries and in 2017 there are 67 such countries.

According to United Nations Report published in 2015, the USA is the largest producer of Electronic Waste followed by China and Japan. India is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the generation of e-waste. The adjacent quantity for each country is measured in million metric tonnes. However, these figures are not important from your examination point of view.

If we talk in terms of per-capita production of e-waste, according to a list published by Forbes International, Norway is the largest per capita contributor. India does not rank in top 10 per-capita e-waste producers.

THANK YOU!!