



# E-WASTE

**Implications, regulations, and  
management in India and  
current global best practices**

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# Foreword

TERI carried out a pioneering project in 1995 to highlight India's record of management of the environment and natural resources in the first 50 years of the country's Independence. The first phase of this project was completed in 1997 and a detailed report was released on the eve of Independence Day that year, which marked 50 years of India's existence as an independent nation. The results were startling, projecting a business-as-usual pattern of growth over the next 50 years, which provided an outcome that was truly shocking. Since then, the structure of Indian industry has been altered substantially with a larger share now being contributed by the electronics industry, which has mushroomed in several centres and clusters across the country. Consequently, the problem of e-waste has acquired very large proportions, the management of which presents a major challenge to policy-makers and society at large. However, this challenge throws up some generic issues, which require careful reflection on the manner in which we are dealing with the problems related to the environment. First, what we need is a judicious mix of market-based solutions and regulations that would ensure that we use the best means that are at our command for attaining desired objectives of environmental quality. At the same time, the problem of e-waste is unique in the sense that it represents problems emanating from an activity that is quite new and where systems and practices would lend themselves to new ways by which we do business and at the same time protect the environment. If we allow the problem of e-waste to grow unmitigated then to bring about change at a later stage would become much more difficult and far more costly, because attitudes, values, and infrastructure would be rigidly fixed without the possibility of any change.

Environmental protection of all kinds requires the complete involvement of concerned communities and the management of organizations that are responsible for creating the problem. In the case of e-waste, the problem is now becoming widespread and diffused, because computerization and the use of electronic

equipment are expanding at an unprecedented rate. Most of the users of this new industrial innovation are generally educated and, therefore, can be organized to provide management solutions that are effective and without rigid bureaucratic hurdles and roadblocks. It is, therefore, essential to initiate appropriate measures early, so that we do not run into the hurdle of rigid and established habits and practices that would be difficult to change.

Other countries of the world have had a head start in managing the problem of e-waste and it would, therefore, be extremely important to learn from their experiences. From that point of view, this book provides very valuable knowledge because it covers the subject of e-waste regulation both in India and internationally. The book not only deals with health and related issues with respect to this category of waste, but also examines recycling technologies. In this respect, this is not only a volume that addresses policy challenges effectively in the light of international experiences but also provides knowledge on the technological aspects that are at the core of actions that need to be taken. Overall, therefore, this book represents an extremely timely and rich source of knowledge and information that would be valuable not only in policy formulation but also in informing communities and organizations grappling with this problem. It also underlines the means by which they can initiate effective measures to manage this challenge before it becomes insurmountable.



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