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Bengaluru gets first e-waste bin on roadside

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BENGALURU: In a first in the IT hub, a bin has been installed in a public place to collect e-waste. The bin put up on CMH Road in east Bengaluru on Saturday morning jointly by NGO Saahas and Environmental Synergies in Development (Ensyde), NGO, and BM Kaval Residents' Welfare Association, will collect discarded electrical or electronic devices. The city generates 37,000 metric tonnes of electronic waste every year.

Ensyde and Saahas had set up such drop-off boxes at nine BangaloreOne Centres and two post offices in Jayanagar, Banashankari, JP Nagar, Arakere, Koramangala and BTM Layout.

Manvel Alur, CEO, Ensyde, said the company has collected 4.4 tonnes of e-waste in 10 months. "We have recovered 306kg of metals and diverted 26.34kg of toxic metals from landfills. The e-waste collected is given to a recycler for further processing," she said.

"E-waste is the fastest growing category of waste in the world. The moment it is dismantled, it has hazardous effect on health as it contains harmful chemicals and heavy metals," said Divya Tiwari, CEO, Saahas. The team wants to improve the design of the bin to make it pilferage-proof.

The residents of Indira Nagar and BM Kaval are elated with the introduction of the bin. "In our locality, segregation at source has been going on successfully. But e-waste was getting mixed with dry waste as it was not separately collected by BBMP. Now

with this move, e-waste entering landfills can be stopped," said Rahi Santhanam, member of the RWA.

The bin has two openings, one at the top for bigger material and another at down for those smaller in size. The bin has been kept in front of M K Retails as its director Niyas K N has been supporting the initiative. "I want to replicate this model in seven other retail shops across the city," he added.

The RWA that has been proactive in scientific solid waste management plans to install a bin only for medical waste generated from households. "This includes sanitary napkins, diapers and such waste that need to be processed separately. There's an increase in adult diaper waste," said Sneha Nandihal, president, BM Kaval Residents Welfare Association.

What does e-waste contain?

E-waste has trace amounts of valuable metals and rare earth elements that need to be extracted and reused. It also contains toxic chemicals such as lead, mercury, cadmium and arsenic which are harmful to human health.

What can be dropped?

Used, worn-out keyboards, cables, modems, mobiles, cameras, CA drives, adapters, cassette players, hair dryers, chargers and phones can be dropped in the bin. Avoid larger items like CPUs, TV sets and refrigerators which can be disposed at the nearest community waste processing centre of Saahas.

TIMES VIEW

An e-waste bin in a public place could well make a huge difference in ensuring that such waste gets collected better and is disposed of in a more scientific manner rather than being strewn all over and cause serious environmental damage. Earlier efforts at such collection in Bangalore One centres and post offices have met with some success and this latest initiative could well be a precursor to more drop-boxes in public places and much higher use. The harmful effects of e-waste are long lasting and more awareness is needed. Given their high visibility, e-waste drop-boxes will work towards that end too.