

Message

Today, electronic waste poses a significant challenge for the society, due to fast discarding old devices with its improved version. In India, lack of awareness about ill effect of Improper managing the end-of-life products, is also a major concern. An effective collection, scientific recycling and appropriate disposal of e-waste are important for protecting the health and environment. E-Waste Rule is exhaustive, where EPR clause as well as PRO has helped manufacturers in streamlining the waste into formal channel. Mass balancing of the material from PRO to recyclers is, however, not foolproof and leakage of material remains a big challenge.

Informal sector plays an important role in collection of e-waste since they are well networked; however, their processing of e-waste in unscientific manner needs to be restricted. Affordable processing infrastructure needs to be created for environment-friendly recycling in the country. Indigenous recycling technology could play an important role. Various labs in the country have developed affordable technologies for e-waste recycling. Efforts are needed to handhold with those R&D labs to reach the informal sector for upgrading their operations. Formalisation of informal sector is essential for streamlining the environment friendly recovery of precious metals from e-waste and thereby ensuring resource efficiency. Private sector should also join hands with Government for creating the infrastructure.

Electronic products are continuously changing, thus, continuous R&D efforts are required to develop recycling technology for these varied products, their components including printed circuit board, rare earth element from components, Li-ion battery, various categories of plastics etc. Government could prioritise the research areas for evolving affordable technology with dedicated funding. Research outcomes should be linked to end-users industries and start-ups with viable business plan. In this direction, this ministry has already initiated a project on creating the Centre of Excellence on E-Waste Recycling at C-MET, Hyderabad, with co-funding from State Government and industry.

I am glad that the outreach of the Awareness Programme, initiated by MeitY, has taken an impact to the grass-root level of the society and the programme is now being carried out by the industry houses. Local champions would be required to take it forward. The collection drive should be taken up by RWAs as well. I feel that the manufacturers should put their collective efforts to continue the programme in sustainable manner for long term effects. Stringent implementation of the E-waste Rule, creating awareness about the hazards associated to unscientific e-waste processing and creation of affordable infrastructures are important to address the present challenges.