

EFFECTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Last year, the Environment Ministry revised 'Waste Management Rules' in 6 different areas. It is extremely important to address 'sustainability and climate change' effectively and efficiently while addressing and implementing these rules.

Climate change is having a treacherous impact on our Natural atmospheric balance, the El Nino effect being one experienced very badly in the Indian context.

Climate change has not only created serious issues in the sphere of food productivity but also has led to increased incidence of deadly diseases like TB which are prevalent even amongst the high lifestyle citizens and impeached upon immunity of human lives. However, the percentage of ignorant to the knowledge of sustainability is very high which has led to massive artificial damage to climate in addition to naturally occurring one.

Ignorance can only be curtailed by making rules mandatory for each and every individual of the society. The implementation of various waste management rules should be further ensured by urban and rural development authorities by measuring the area of green cover, usage of sustainable technologies which reduce carbon foot print.

Solid Waste Management

Rural and urban landscapes produce factors promoting carbon in equal terms. In rural areas use of inorganic fertilizers, diesel based water pumps and irrigation systems, tractors, sugar processing industry etc. have contributed immensely to carbon foot prints.

On the other hand urban sewage, solid waste and industrialization has brought about higher pollution indices. It should be mandated for a group of 3 apartments to have common solid non plastic garbage processors to convert waste into fertilizers at micro level and collection of plastic waste separately to be recycled.

This rule if mandated will not only help in eradicating air pollution but also help in making lives of garbage collectors easy. Secondly solar based society lights needs to be mandated. This may allow some subsidy in taxes which are too high without any appreciable service quality for urban apartments. Such an activity will not only raise awareness at micro level but will also help propagation of the message of sustainability.

E-Waste Management

Currently, 90% of e-waste is managed by the unorganized sector comprising of unskilled kabaadiwalas. There is a pressing need to integrate this unorganized sector with the organized sector through skill development. Creating awareness among every individual on eco-friendly recycling of electronic waste is the most important step for the successful implementation of the E-waste Management Rules 2016. It is the responsibility of every citizen to comply with these rules.

India has emerged as the world's 5th largest electronic waste producer and discards roughly 18.5 lakh tonne of e-waste every year where in telecom equipments alone accounts for 12%. The industry must focus on environmentally sustainable and harmonized approach for recycling. The key feature of the E-Waste Management Rules 2016 is the introduction of the provision of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for effective channelization of E-waste to the registered dismantlers or recyclers. In this regards, the Ministry must create awareness addressing all stakeholders of the value chain.

The Government must focus on the three 'Ts of training, transport and technology' to create a sustainable formal system of e-waste management. The first T should address imparting of skills on informal kabadiwalas about eco-friendly methods of e-waste management. The second T refers to investment in reverse logistics to transport e-waste from generation points to collection centres and the third T refers to use of cutting-edge technology to recover assets from e-waste.

Additionally, the Government must also make it compulsory for manufacturers to introduce deposit refund scheme to incentivize consumers to return their old hardwares. Also, the municipal authorities must cancel tender process for awarding waste management contracts and instead choose from a panel of 3-4 recyclers.

Prosecution cannot be the only solution to solve the menace of e-waste. The Government must provide amnesty scheme for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) not complying with the e-waste rules and must initiate education and awareness programme at the grassroots level for better compliance in future.

Considering that 60% of the waste is generated in around 10 cities in India, the e-waste management drive must largely focus on metros. There are over 500,000 rag pickers in Mumbai and the Government must train them on efficient e-waste management practices. The industry and Government must work together to create an effective legal framework to address e-waste menace.

The Government must offer incentives such as tax rebate for industries to comply with e-waste rules. The informal e-waste recyclers must be integrated with the formal sector through training and skill development.

hri Bishwanath Sinha (IAS, KL..1992)	Joint Secretary	+91 11 24695274 (Off.) +91 11 24695277 (Fax) +91 11 26262515 (Res.)
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