

E-Waste Regulations and Policy Considerations

SANKHYA (संख्या)

“There cannot be a good plan for economic progress without adequate data and there cannot be adequate data without a good plan for collecting them...”

P.C Mahalanobis, Member, First Planning Commission of India & Scientist

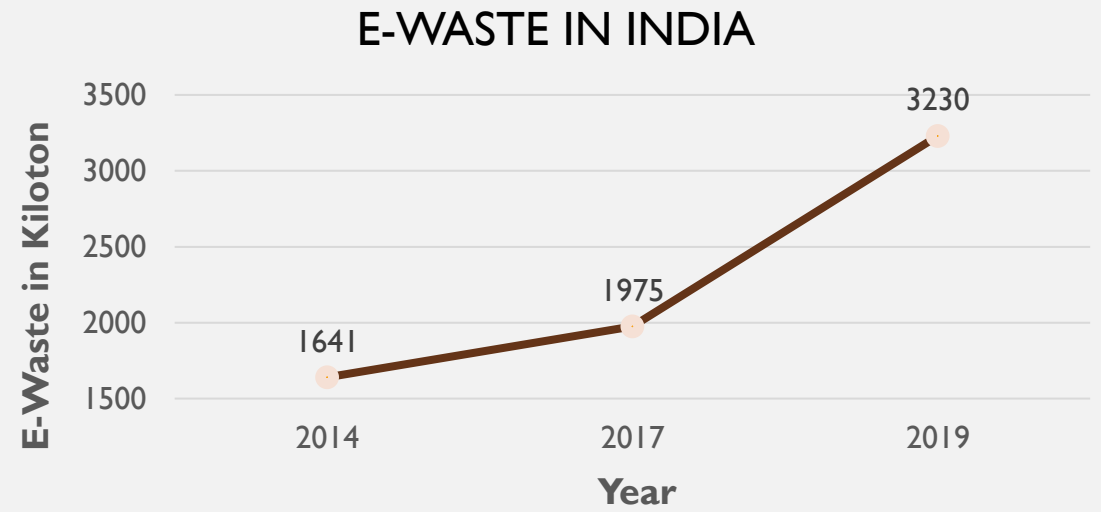
E-WASTE REGULATIONS: INDIA

Production of e-waste has increased drastically in the world and it has become a major part of life. India has witnessed a huge increase in e-waste in the last 15 years. As per an article released by the Department of Information Technology in 2007, India generates 383KT of e-waste.

The government of India has introduced new regulations namely, E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, which shall replace the existing 2016 rules on e-waste in the country. The rules were introduced by the government in November 2022 and has come into effect from April 1, 2023.

The rules have extended the definition of E-Waste, as E-Waste shall now include 106 items of electronic and electrical equipments (EEE) compared to earlier 21 EEE items in 2016 rules.

The rules have introduced provisions related to environmental compensation, as well as verification & audit for better enforcement of laws.



REGULATIONS ON E-WASTE IN INDIA

E-WASTE AND ITS REGULATIONS: A GLOBAL SCENARIO

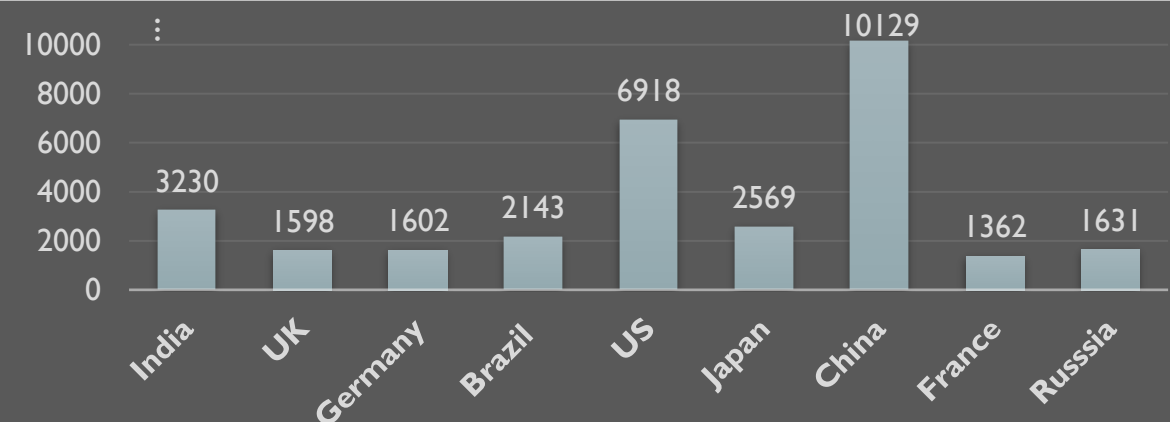
Not all nations in the world have laws governing e-waste. According to the Global E-waste Monitor 2020, only 79 of the 175 countries have national laws or policies on e-waste.

European Union has a legislative framework DIRECTIVE 2012/19/EU on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), which provides measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing or reducing the adverse impacts of the production and management of WEEE.

Among international jurisdictions, Switzerland, Japan and Germany have stringent regulations on e-waste. Switzerland has introduced a regulatory system where the roles and responsibilities vary based on the sector in which the entity belongs.

China is still the largest e-waste producer in the world, even though the country implemented e-waste regulations in 2010. Further, even though second largest amount of e-waste in the world is generated by the US, there is no national legislation regulating e-waste.

E-Waste in Different Countries – Global E-Waste Monitor 2020



- E-waste generation has increased significantly across the world. The Global E-Waste Monitor, in 2019, reported that the total e-waste generated in the world was 53.6 Megaton. Further, it reported that only 9.3 Mt (17%) out of the total was being collected and recycled.
- E-waste generated in different regions varies drastically. As of 2019, it was 2.9 Mt in Africa, 13.1 Mt in the Americas, 12 Mt in Europe, 24.9 Mt in Asia and 0.7 Mt in Oceania.
- Asia generated the majority of e-waste followed by the Americas. Oceania countries generated the least amount of e-waste.

BEST PRACTICE IN WORLD AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- The EU Directive 2022/2380EN has amended the Radio Equipment Directive 2014/53/EU, and has introduced a 'common charging' solution. As per the directive, every company has to use the C-type USB charging cable for all smartphones. This was done to control electronic waste associated with the production, transportation and disposal of chargers. EU under the same has warned Apple Inc to implement it by December 2024.

- Countries like Netherlands has achieved more than 80% of e-waste recycling through proper management by prioritising collection, disposal and recycling of e-waste through their policies and regulations. Although circular economy concept is practised in all countries, the Netherlands has emphasized on the implementation of e-waste management in a systematic and coordinated manner to achieve the best results.

AWARENESS PROGRAM FOR SEGREGATION

In the last decade, India has seen 10 times increase in e-waste due to dependency, upgradation and lack of management of EEE by users. People are not aware of the impact segregation of waste can have on overall waste management. Further, the collectors should be also directed not to take any waste from households in case they are not segregating it. Responsibility of users and households is required as much as that of recycling companies. Basic management starts at the users' level.

REPORTING OF RECYCLING ARRANGEMENT

Companies producing products should make legal arrangements with recycling companies. In order to prevent the fabrication of reports and improper management by companies, they must provide details of the recycling partner, including data pertaining to e-waste delivered for recycling and out of that how much is disposed of and recycled. This will enable smooth working with increased recycling and reporting of e-waste management in India.

INTRODUCE E-WASTE MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGIES

Laws on anti-dumping and banning techniques are not adequate for maintaining and improving the health of the environment. The government should introduce ways to promote innovative waste management technology, which can help in managing our electronic waste and also extend the life of an item.

WANT TO SUBMIT IDEAS FOR
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questions*

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Sankhya* is an initiative of Bridge Policy Think Tank to create interface snapshots in statistics and policy analysis while promoting critical thinking and analysis.

** Sankhya means numbers and is also a school of rationalist Indian philosophy. According to Sankhya philosophy reliable knowledge comes from only three pramanas (proofs)- pratyakṣa ('perception'), anumāṇa ('inference') and śabda (āptavacana, meaning, 'word/testimony of reliable sources').*