

E-Waste - "A Global Challenge"

World over, almost 50 million tons of electronic waste or e-waste is generated annually and if we recycle this entire quantity in a systematic manner, we may avoid burden on our ecology to a great extent and save our environment from further damages. These considerations have led to an intense debate about how E-waste can be best managed. To facilitate a discussion on the issue, ETThinkTurf has organized a panel discussion, E-waste—"A Global Challenge".



In the opening remarks, Mr. Vinnie Mehta, Executive Director, MAIT said that e-waste is one of the rapidly growing environmental problems of the World. With extensive use of computers and other electronic equipments coupled with increasing discarding habits, rapid technological change, there is a significant increase in e-waste generation. On one hand, these end-of-life electronics items contain valuable commodities and on the other hand potentially harmful substances such as lead, cadmium, mercury etc. These toxic wastes can have dreadful impact on environment and health. Regardless of whether these elements are valuable or potentially hazardous, recovery of ingredients from the e-waste is of vital importance from the point of environment, ecology and health of the stakeholders.

India produces e-waste of about 3,00,000 tones per annum, out of which only 5% of precious metal can be extracted. With consonance Mr. Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link said that volume of the e-waste is increasing at the rate of 20% per annum. As a result, it is likely India can face numerous challenges in managing e-waste in near future. This can be relating to space to recycle this waste or lack of other infrastructure for recycling. One of the major challenges of recycling plants in India is to recover precious metals, so that it can become profitable venture. For that company is required to invest in high-end technology, said Mr. Steven Art, Sales Manager, Umicore Precious Metal Refining, Belgium. To achieve cost efficiency, economies of scale are important for recycling plant of e-waste. Another issue is, there is urgent need to organize collection centers for e-waste. It can be resolved by having formalized collection center for e-waste. Moreover, as informal sector is very active in collection of e-waste, the integration between both formal and informal can lead to better management of e-waste.

Dr. A S Rao, Advisor at Government of India, Scientist at Ministry of Science and Technology, dwelt on how Govt can play the role of facilitator in e-waste management. He said that, Govt is actively evaluating proposals for start up companies in e-waste recycling



and planning to float a venture funds to funds those companies. Further, Govt is also planning to subsidized funds for the company, which are planning to foray into development of technology for recycling of e-waste. However, legislation can also play a crucial for the development of this Industry. As e-waste exist both at user as well manufacture level, it is important to define legislation at both the levels. There are already guidelines for e-waste but legal enforcement needs to define clearly, said Lakshmi Raghupathy, Advisor MAIT. Existing e-waste guidelines already excludes manufacturing process, which belongs to hazardous waste, generated one level in terms of production. As far as recycling of e-waste is concerned, beyond 2009 policy maker should develop a regulatory framework for recycling of the e-waste said Mr. Amit Jain, MD IRG Systems South Asia



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Pvt Ltd in consonance with Dr. Lakshmi. There is need to create awareness and make provision to collect e-waste. He stress that our recycling infrastructure should start at companies level, even if the best of collection systems in place. Further, infrastructure of e-waste should be integrated to supply chain management. It is important to look more in terms of initiatives and whether we are using the right technology or not. We need to develop local system for e-waste management. So problems can be solved at lower level. Awareness is important at both manufacture and consumer levels. There is need of tripartite arrangement model for e-waste management since e-waste recycling is not responsibility of one party said Mr. B. K Soni, Chairman, Eco Recycling Ltd. Legislation is needed but responsibility is more important in dealing how e-waste is handled.

System has to be improved and support form Govt is required. Incentives should be provided to e-waste recycling companies. We should try to find cheapest recycling technology for e-waste. Mr. Kumar Radhakrishnan, Sr. Vice President-Asia, SIMS Group, Australia, throw light on opportunities in this sector. He said that recycling of e-waste is global industry as all the OEM is MNC's. As OEM produces most of the e-waste, they can recycled the waste and reuse by the entrepreneur. India recycles the e-waste of developed country to churn out money. As smaller cities do most of the recycling, it is becoming the hub for recycling of e-waste. At the end there was consensus that there is need of formal guidelines for e-waste but practicable solution should be given. Further, investment in high tech technology can only be possible through collaboration. There is need of separate legislation for consumer durable waste. In addition to it, Govt should provide incentives for the development of the e-waste industry.



Mr. B. K Soni, Chairman, Eco Recycling Ltd
"Tripartite arrangement model needs to develop for e-waste management as e-waste not solely responsibility of any generators"



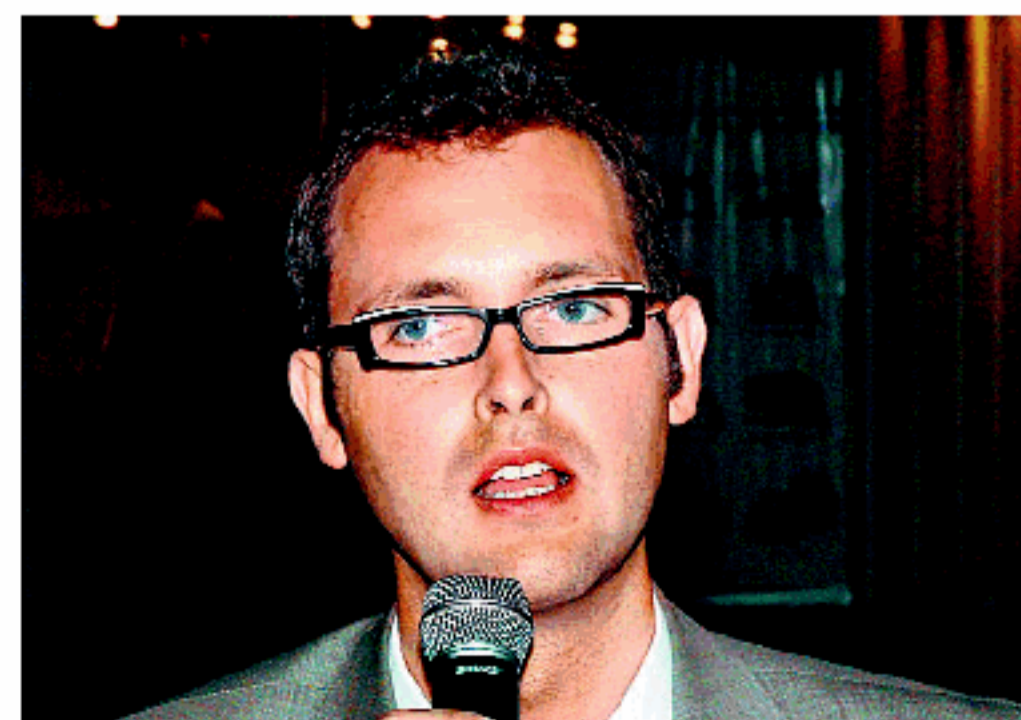
Dr. Lakshmi Raghupathy, Advisor MAIT
"while collecting e-waste awareness should be created at both manufacture and consumer levels"



Dr. A S Rao, Advisor at Government of India
Scientist at Ministry of Science and Technology
"for solving intermediate level problems of recycling, there is need of local innovation with hybrid technology"



Mr. Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link
"Health and environment is increasingly impacted by e-waste, so it is high time to find feasible solution for recycling of e-waste"



Mr. Steven Art, Sales Manager, Umicore Precious Metal Refining, Belgium
"Formalized system of collection of e-waste is most important step towards recycling."



Mr. Amit Jain,
MD IRG Systems South Asia Pvt Ltd
"we need to develop our local solution for improving collection efficiency"



Mr. Kumar Radhakrishnan, Sr. Vice President-Asia,
SIMS Group, Australia
"Producers need to take responsibility of all the products they generate"



Mr. Vinnie Mehta,
Executive Director, MAIT
"Electronic waste or e-waste is one of the rapidly growing environmental problems of the World"