E-Waste Issue in India

What is the issue?

The extraction from the discarded e-wastes which is usually performed by children, is a crude and hazardous process that goes unregulated in India.

What is e-waste?

- **E-waste-** E-waste (electronic waste) is used to describe old, end-of-life or discarded electric and electronic appliances.
- This e-waste is comprised of 21 types of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE) notified Under the **E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016.**
- E-waste includes components, consumables, parts and spares of

    1. Information technology and communication equipment
    2. Consumer electrical and electronics

- It releases toxic elements such as Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Chromium, Polybrominated biphenyls and Polybrominated diphenyl.
- Many children suffer from serious skin diseases and chronic lung infections due to continuous exposure to chemical-laden toxins found in the metals.

What is the picture of e-waste production?

> *India is the third largest generator of e-wastes in the world after China and the USA*

- According to the **Global E-waste Monitor 2020**, the world dumped 53.6 million metric tons of e-waste in 2019.
- India produced 3.2 million metric tons of e-waste, much of which is dumped for dismantling and recycling with no regulations.
- Only 22.7% of the e-waste generated in 2019-20 in India was collected, dismantled, and recycled or disposed off.

What efforts were taken in this regard?

E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2016

- **EPR** - The Rulesextend the responsibility to producers to manage a system of e-waste collection, storage, transportation, and environmentally sound dismantling and recycling through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR).
- **E-waste collection** - The rules also promote and encourage the establishment of an

efficient e-waste collection mechanism.
- **Dismantling and recycling**- The dismantlers and recyclers have to obtain authorisation from concerned State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) or Pollution Control Committees (PCCs).
- They grant authorisation after ensuring that the dismantlers and recyclers have the facilities as per the guidelines of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECS)

- The amended SPECS provides a financial incentive of 25% on capital expenditure for setting up modern recycling facilities for the extraction of precious metals from e-waste.
- A policy paper on circular economy (CE) in the EEE sector says e-waste mining offers an opportunity to secure the supply of resources needed for manufacturing EEE products.

What is the need of the hour?

- The lack of a dedicated and robust e-waste collection chain in India is a major bottleneck.
- There is a need for investments in e-waste management systems to promoteenvironment-friendly and sustainable metal recovery processes.
- Beyond its economic value, recycling can shield living beings and the environment from toxic substances.
- As e-waste recycling with primitive methods can damage the environment, the recycling infrastructure should be improvedand manufacturers encouraged to set up e-waste drop points.
- Consumers should also get incentives for disposing of theirdevices properly.

References

1. The Indian Express | Impact of e-waste on poor children
2. Time of India | Why India needs to ramp up e-waste collection now
3. The Hindu Businessline | India’s e-waste

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering