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E-waste: An emerging threat to Northern Province Sri Lanka

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During the last few decades the electrical and electronics industry has experienced an enormous growth in Sri Lanka. It has been unprecedented in Northern Province in post war context and COVID-19 pandemic scenarios. The objective of this research was to assess present status of e-waste management among households and other stakeholders in urban and peri urban areas in the Northern Province. The study used descriptive survey design. This research has tried to understand the existing gap, by identifying the different barriers to and drivers for the adoption of e-waste management measures through the perceptions of the different stakeholders involved in e-waste issues. This research investigated awareness level of e-waste in Northern Province. The total sample of households and other stakeholders (repairers, waste collectors etc.) in the all 5 districts were 66 and 55 respectively. Data collected through the digital questionnaires (Kobotoolbox and Google forms), key informant interviews and observations. The findings of the study revealed that households' respondents were having good understanding on meaning of e-waste than other stakeholders. Most of the e-waste handed over to local government bodies and sold as trash to mobile waste collectors. In Northern province, there is growing concern coupled with increasing consumptions, increasing accumulation, increasing usage of electricity and generation of e-waste over time which is primarily due to lack of adequate facilities in local government and absence of recycling possibilities to deal with the e-waste. In addition, there is no existing policy framework for dealing with e-waste. The awareness of e-waste management, knowledge on local and international laws, special treatment, advanced technology, health and environmental risks of e-waste were low amongst stakeholders. The findings show that disposal methods among households (46%) and other stakeholders (87%) were storing than other methods. Another finding was found that decreasing trend of repairing and reusing the EEE generally and increasing trend of purchasing EEE among households in COVID-19 pandemic. The major e-waste causes encompass rapid obsolescence rate, breakage, demands for extra and innovative models or design of electronic gadgets. Most of the stakeholders do not know what happened to e-waste which is collected from their stores. Citizens should be made aware of e-waste with novel ideas. Besides all stakeholders should work jointly with local government, CEA etc. to ensure proper e-waste management and establish the e-waste collection and recycling facilities.

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Biography

Harithas Aruchchunan is a humanitarian aid and development community professional with over 14 years of experience in humanitarian aid and development community activities in ethnic war affected, Sri Lanka. He has most passionate when it comes to the most vulnerable and marginalized communities in Sri Lanka. He has been involved in the implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of projects. Projects related to Agriculture, Livelihood, Small Medium Enterprise, Food security, Education, Water and Sanitation, Women empowerment, Social inclusion, Child protection, Community governance etc. He participated in a variety of international and national professional networks, training, conferences, workshops and associations for humanitarian aid and development community activities in Sri Lanka.

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