

Tackling India's Growing Toxic Waste

By **Sarita Gupta**

Ever wonder what happened to that old computer you junked or that dead car battery? Chances are they were transported thousands of miles to a developing country where poor people make a living from extracting lead and other metals from discarded items. Recycling e-waste might be economically productive but exacts a huge environmental and health toll when toxins and heavy metals are dumped improperly, often right in the same communities as the workers. The result is millions plagued with disease, disability and death.

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The result is a four million ton problem that only promises to get worse with industrialization and population growth.

The Indian government to its credit is trying to address the problem. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has been allocated a significant amount in the current Indian budget to remediate polluted sites and the World Bank has stepped in with additional monies. Along with resources, there is strong expertise in India regarding pollution. However no complex remediation projects have yet been implemented and there is a dearth of state-of-the-art technical expertise and trained personnel to do so.

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Takeaways

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