

Awareness on E-waste: A Case Study in Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo

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E-waste is the popular informal term for e-products nearing the end of their useful life and it has silently become one of the growing segment of our national waste stream. E-waste can be defined as all secondary electronic-electrical appliances whether sold, donated, obsolete or broken. Migration from analogue to digital technology has influenced the replacement of new e-products and it also has intensified the growth of discarded electronic-electrical appliances as e-waste. The objectives of this study were to identify the consumption pattern of e-gadgets, the different modes of exposing e-waste into the environment and the level of awareness regarding the impacts of e-waste among special degree undergraduates of faculty of Arts. The study was conducted in the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo as a case study, Out of 360 second year special degree undergraduates, 40 undergraduates were selected through the purposive sampling technique, structured questionnaires and two in-depth interviews to collect primary data. Results revealed 90% of respondents were known about e-waste before. According to the data outcome 42.5% of respondents claimed that Social Media were the key source of information about e-wastes. Though respondents have awareness about e-waste in various degrees the majority of both male and female respondents 95% were not much aware about the e-waste collecting bodies in Sri Lanka. When considering the health impacts of e-waste 65% of respondents were conscious about health impacts of e-wastes but 12.5% have reported that they were not totally aware of it. The awareness on e-waste among second year special degree undergraduates of the faculty of Arts is critically high, and the impact of social media as a source of information about e-waste has been a key factor of awareness regarding e-waste for them.

Keywords: E-waste, Social-media, Electronic-Electrical appliances, Awareness, Consumption