

ECO RECYCLING LTD

Making mission & biz

With India churning out at least a million tons of e-waste annually and the size of the e-waste management business estimated at around Rs. 10,000 crore, Eco Recycling is well-positioned to benefit from the earning opportunity as well as to discharge an environmental obligation to society. The first e-waste management firm to be listed on the BSE, it has a modern e-waste recycling plants at Vasai and Bhiwandi, near Mumbai, with a processing capacity of 100,000 tons per annum, as well as a fully-equipped Research and Development Centre. Its farsighted CMD, Brijkishor Soni, is on a mission to educate the informal segment of Kabadiwalas and install Eco-Bins countrywide for e-waste collection.



With the dawn of the 21st century, a new segment — e-waste management — has emerged on the industrial horizon of the globe. Electronic waste; i.e., electrical or electronic products that have lost their usefulness and influence and have become non-working or obsolete, has threatened to become a dangerous health hazard for human beings, animals and birds, as well as flora and fauna, and a modern enemy of the environment. As a result, its management is an emerging industry of the 21st century, valued at around \$ 50 billion worldwide.

According to B K Soni, Chairman and Managing Direc-

tor of Eco Recycling Ltd, the current size of the e-waste management segment in India is estimated at around Rs. 10,000 crore. “Originally a business of ‘Kabadiwala’ (scrapdealers), e-waste management has now assumed a new modern scientific shape. As a pioneer of this industrial segment in India, we have undertaken a systematic exercise to train Kabadiwalasto join this new stream,” says the passionate environmentalist and new-age entrepreneur, whose company is the first e-waste management firm listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange.

According to Mr. Soni, the prospects for the e-waste man-

of e-waste



agement industry are tremendous. “The electronics segment is a fast-changing phenomenon. Rapid advances in technology, continued up-gradation in hardware and software, fast-changing fashions and a rising trend in consumerism with sustained improvement in standard of living have been immensely contributing in giving a big push to e-waste. With rapid changes in technologies and creation of new and more useful products, the current products soon get outdated and are deemed useless and become scrap material. Most of these electronic items that are thus discarded contain toxic elements such as beryllium, cadmium, mercury, lead and acid fumes, which endanger the environment and result in extreme hazard to all concerned,” he notes, adding, “Over 50 million tons of e-waste is generated every year globally and the quantum is growing at a rate of around 30 per cent, as per estimates made by the Manufacturers’ Association of Information Technology, the apex organization representing hardware, training, R&D and hardware design, and other associated service segments of the Indian IT industry.”

With India emerging as one of the fastest-growing economies and rising incomes pushing up the standard of living, discarded electronic material is on a sustained rise. Government estimates – which include only television sets, computers and mobile phones — put it around 18 lakh tons per year. Taking into account various other equipment, the figure would swiftly cross three million-tons mark. Obviously, the business of e-waste management companies is rising

continuously.

Eco Recycling Ltd, popularly known as Ecoreco, has set up two modern e-waste recycling plants at Vasai and near Bhiwandi both near Mumbai in Maharashtra. These fully-equipped plants have a capacity of 100,000 tons per year. The company has set up a fully-equipped Research and Development Centre to develop newer and newer technologies for dismantling discarded electronic equipment and to recover various precious & rare metals from e-waste.

HELP FROM GOVT

A Cost Accountant-turned-enlightened ‘21st century *Kabadiwala*’, Mr. Soni has taken the business of recycling e-waste to new heights. Ecoreco is the first recycling company in the country with a modern and fully equipped R&D facility which is recognized by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), a part of the Union Ministry of Science and Technology. It is the only company to be funded by the DSIR to the tune of Rs. 12 crore as a soft loan. NEDO Japan has supplied modern technologies or processing white goods, CRT, printed circuit boards and the Indian government contributed its share by waiving customs duty on the machineries. Mr. Soni succeeded in roping in Mitsubishi Material Corporation, Japan as the company’s technical partner and Nippon Magnetic Corporation happily took 5 per cent stake in the company’s equity capital.

Today, Ecoreco is engaged in the full spectrum of activities covered under e-waste management, right from collection of e-waste from the doorstep of generators, its transportation, sorting the materials into working / non-working equipment or components and secured data destruction, to dismantling of equipment, size reduction, sorting into different commodities like glass, plastic, iron/steel, aluminum, copper and precious metals, remarketing of reusable equipment, components and various recovered items as well as disposal of hazardous substances as per the prescribed rules and regulations.

Says Mr. Soni with a sense of pride,



“As the industry pioneer and market leader, Ecoreco provides end-to-end seamlessly integrated solutions for e-waste management to the private sector, government departments, NGOs, households, educational institutions and all other entities willing to discard their e-waste in an environment-friendly manner.”

In short, the company’s end-to-end services comprise:

- **Reverse logistics**
- **Data destruction (onsite and offsite)**
- **Recycling and recovery**
- **Asset management**
- **Lamp recycling**
- **Extended Producers’ Responsibility (EPR) implementation**
- **Skill Development for waste management**
- **Franchisee for collection of e-waste**

Realizing that an adequate supply of e-waste is the key to the successful working of the company, Ecoreco has, with a view to facilitating an effortless e-waste collection network across the nation, enabling organized recycling of e-waste from individuals and small generators and creating awareness and execution which is the motto of ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’, initiated a massive program of installing Eco-Bins at various places where people can deposit their discarded electronic equipment. Ecoreco will organize collection of this e-waste from these Eco-Bins and take the same to their recycling facility for scientific disposal.

HEARTY RESPONSE

The company’s initiative has been wellreceived, with educationists, social workers and responsible citizens in large housing societies welcoming it wholeheartedly. For example, Dr. Mala Kharkar of Patkar-Varde College of Goregaon in Mumbai comments, “Under the Institute’s Social Responsibility (ISR), Patkar-Varde College has, in collaboration with Eco Recycling placed Eco-Bins in the college premises. We call this initiative a movement to make our environment eco-friendly. This motive is well appreciated by our students and college staff. For spreading awareness amongst the college’s young minds and in the vicinity, all of us make efforts and keep posting messages and reminders for bringing and putting e-waste in the Eco-Bin.”

Mr. Soni is a man with an innovative mind. Realizing that in a large country like India spread over millions of miles and inhabited in hundreds of cities and thousands of villages, the task of collecting discarded electronic equipment would not be possible without the help of Kabadiwalas who have been engaged in this job for ages, he devised a scheme to utilize their services. He promoted



Shashank Soni, V P (Commercial)

Ecoreco Enviro Education Pvt. Ltd, a subsidiary of Eco Recycling Ltd, with financial assistance from NSDC (National Skill Development Corporation) to train present & future waste workers and new aspirants who considers waste management is another area of career building and systematic and scientific collection and environment friendly processing of e-waste & other wastes is the only choice for better living.

According to Mr. Soni, Ecoreco Enviro Education (EEE) provides a unique skill development opportunity to manage waste systematically. The institution provides various courses in skill development. The syllabus has been developed as per global best practices, which include interactive class room training as well as field training in the relevant subjects. “I am confident that post training, the present waste workers can continue the business of waste management in their respective domains in an environmentally safe and organized manner,” says Mr. Soni.

Having set up a proper and elaborate infrastructure for e-waste management, Ecoreco is now ready to reap the fruits of all these efforts. The business is going to leapfrog during the next few years, pushing up the topline and bottomline of the company higher and higher. With a sustained improvement in earnings, the company will soon be able to reward its shareholders too. ■

