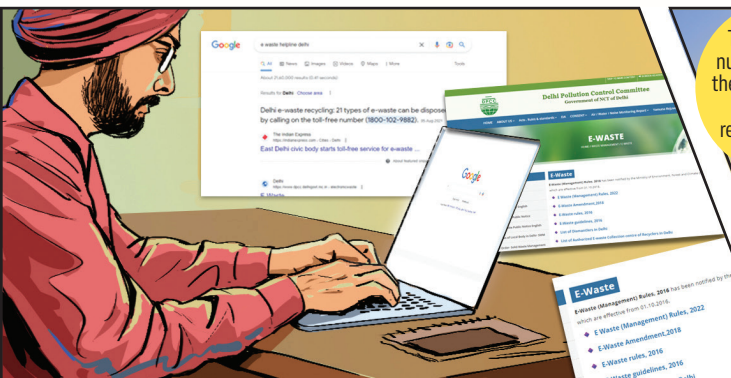


The proper disposal of electronic waste (e-waste) is an issue that plagues Delhi. The Capital is estimated to generate around 200,000 tonne of e-waste per annum, but with no fixed mechanism for the safe and convenient disposal of this waste, around 90% of electronic products end up in landfills, or reach the informal sector, where they are dismantled in the open. HT correspondent Jasjeev Gandhiok tried to get rid of an old smartphone and a broken powerbank to assess how e-waste can safely be disposed of in the Capital.



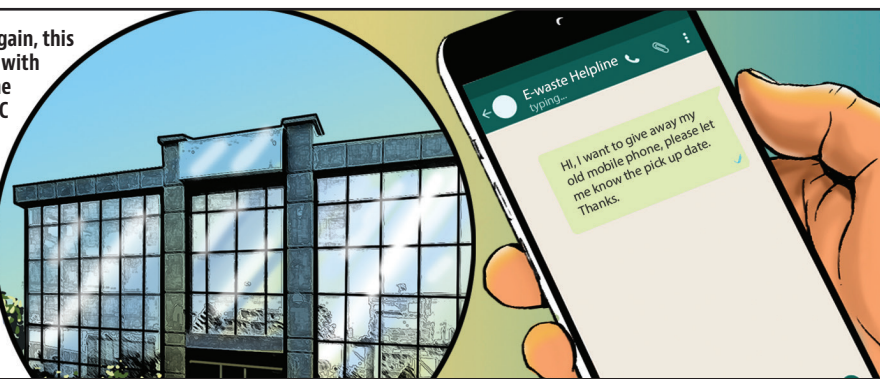
There are three numbers listed for the Mandoli centre, but no one is receiving the call.



Jasjeev searches for a helpline for the disposal of e-waste but is unable to find any such number. The first link on Google — the Delhi Pollution Control Committee home page — has details of the E-Waste (Management) Rules, 2022, but no helpline number.

Jasjeev clicks on a link on the same page that says "List of Authorized E-waste Collection Centre of Recyclers in Delhi" but the list has only one collection centre — a unit in northeast Delhi's Mandoli.

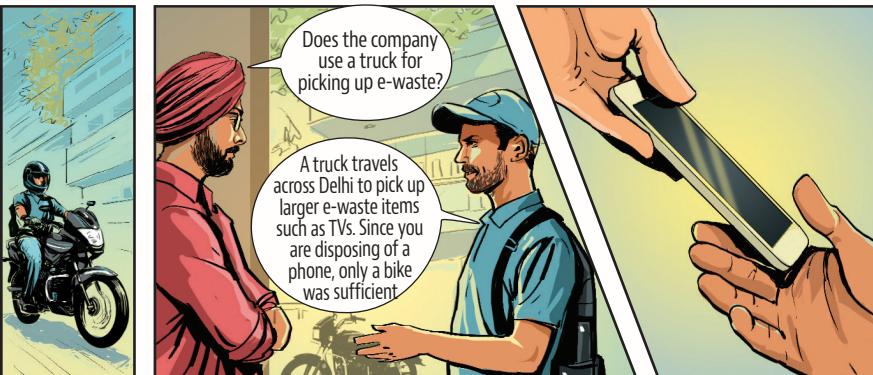
Jasjeev searches online again, this time for e-waste options with the MCD. He finds that the erstwhile SDMC and EDMC had launched toll-free helpline numbers. The SDMC number is not operational, but after dialling the EDMC number, 18001029882, Jasjeev speaks to a person who says he is part of Attero Recycling, based in Noida.



Jasjeev asks what e-waste can be collected by them, and the operator says there is a list of items which will be shared via WhatsApp. Subsequently, Jasjeev receives a WhatsApp message complete with a list of items that is collected by the e-waste management company, such as TVs, mobiles, and refrigerators, along with the amount he will be paid for each item.



The next morning, Jasjeev receives a call, informing him that a person will come to collect the smartphone at 5 pm.



A doorstep collector employed by the e-waste company, Arjun, reaches Jasjeev's house on a motorcycle. Arjun hands him the old smartphone and the broken powerbank. He is informed that he will be paid for the smartphone only.



Arjun fills out a purchase voucher, and asks him how he will like to receive the payment for the phone.

CONCLUSION

Though MCD has provided a helpline number for the pick-up of e-waste from a person's home or office, awareness is low. The number is also not easy to locate online. Having said that, the collection process is smooth. An MCD official said Attero, the firm hired by them, disposes over 60 types of e-waste. Nitin Gupta, CEO, Attero, said that to encourage users to discard electronics properly, they ensure data security and create awareness about the impact on environment.

EXPERT SPEAK If there is a helpline number that works smoothly, MCD should popularise it. The manufacturers and retailers should also make the consumer aware of their e-waste collection mechanism at the time of sale, which is their responsibility under Extended Producer Responsibility. A financial incentive can help further the cause — **PRITI MAHESH**, chief programme coordinator at Toxics Link.