Resource Efficiency - the key to a sustainable future

Utilising resources in an effective way to produce more in order to derive best value and utility is one of the time-tested method for sustainability. Enhancing efficiency in resource use while managing recovery of value from waste/discard materials can provide economic benefit, ensure resource security for continued growth, and ensuring sustainability. In order to ensure rolling out of the strategy paper, NITI Aayog in collaboration with the European Union delegation to India organised the first regional workshop on “Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy” in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The workshop was attended by the officials of State Pollution Control board, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation, experts, academicians, industry delegates representing steel, aluminium, thermal and other sectors. Over the course of the workshop, expert participants from government, industry and academia identified measures and interventions that are needed to make Odisha a leading state in Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy. An action plan was created with these inputs, and will be submitted to the Government of Odisha for its consideration. Major themes identified were collaboration between research and industry for robust solutions to manage industrial waste and recovery of value, sustainable mining framework, measures for implementing the waste-management rules 2016 especially with regard to construction and demolition waste, plastic waste, and end-of-life vehicles. During the inaugural session, the following experts briefed the participants for orientation of the key concepts and trends for operationalizing the RE strategy for India.

Mr. S.K. Mishra, IMMT, Bhubaneshwar highlighted for improving mineral and mining efficiency - Chrome, Fertilizers, sector-wise and sustainability frameworks are required to be created; material resources are scarce and supply needs are adequately addressed; conservation of natural resources; detailed analysis for criticality index for materials - magnetic devices, lighting devices, rare earths, catalysts, strategic materials etc. need to be developed; economic framework needs to be developed in consultation with the international framework for low grade resources, fast tracking of economic growth will put environmental pressures – 800 Million tonnes of ore - 300 MT of steel, and rest is waste hence efficient waste management is required. Informal sector can also be roped in the supply chain. The mining sector is strategic sector, extraction of construction materials and production minerals have increased tremendously so resource efficiency is key to achieve sustainability in the sector.

Mr. B N Satpathy, MeitY (representative from Niti Aayog) – Resource Efficiency has never been addressed before at the State level for awareness creation. Orissa is a mineral rich state and we expect state government to partner in this initiative to demonstrate resource efficiency and circular economy.

Ms. Henriette Faergemann – EU Delegation to India - EU Circular Economy package offers Ecodesign, Best Available Technologies (BAT) documents, legislative proposals with stringent targets and promotion of enhanced utilization of secondary resources. Innovation is key for demonstrating circular economy transition and EU is interested in forging research and development partnerships through the Horizon 2020 project which focusses on water, circular economy and technology development.

Dr D. K Behera, Senior Environmental Scientist, SPCB, Odisha - Coprocessing can offer utilization of secondary resources in an effective manner. Under the new Waste Management Rules – we have asked 5-6 municipalities to segregate solid waste and send it dry waste for co-processing. Case study of Banyan, Hyderabad and Composite Plastics from e-waste, automotive and solid waste were discussed and shared by Dr. Behera. Action plan for bulk waste like Redmud, Fly ash, Gypsum and Mining waste should be developed.

Industry leaders from Steel, Aluminium and Energy companies also expressed their resolve for adopting and enhancing sustainability measures in their respective companies.

• Highlights of the RE Strategy released by the Niti Aayog and EU Delegation to India on November 30, 2017
The Resource Efficiency Strategy includes the core-action plan for the period 2017-2018 and medium
term action plan for 2017 – 2020 with the following key elements:

- Institutional development including setting up an inter-departmental committee and Task force
  of experts,
- Capacity development at various levels for strengthening of capacities and sharing of best
  practices,
- Development of an indicator monitoring framework for baseline analysis
- Launch of Short term course on RE under the MHRD GIAN Programme
- Promotional and regulatory tools in selected sectors (automotive and construction) such as
  Ecolabeling for Secondary Raw Material (SRM) products, recycling standards, R&D and
  Technology Development, Sustainable Public Procurement, development of Industrial clusters
  and waste-exchange platform, information sharing & awareness generation along with
  development of sectoral action plans.

It is expected that the strategy will pave the way forward in taking the agenda towards resource
security and minimizing environment impact by setting up a framework. The strategy implementation
would also identify need for setting up a Bureau for Resource Efficiency (BRE) which creates a
prominence and enabling platform for this topic like the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in India.

Background:

Resource efficiency is a strategy to achieve the maximum possible benefit with least possible
resource input. Fostering resource efficiency aims at governing and intensifying resource utilisation in
a purposeful and effective way. Such judicious resource use brings about multiple benefits along the
three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.

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