

Study Published by GIZ and Chintan on the Adverse Impact of CFL Disposal

The use of Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) is increasing in India. Although this is a positive development given the energy efficiency of CFLs, these lamps contain trace amounts of mercury which, if disposed in an environmentally unsound manner, can have an adverse impact on both health and the environment. To some extent, this nullifies the advantages accruing out of the shift from incandescent bulbs to CFLs. Many countries have standardised processes for the safe handling and recycling of CFLs. In India, however, no such policy has yet been put in place. On the basis of a small survey done in Delhi and Kolkata by GIZ and the Chintan Environmental Research and action group, a study has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment & Forests early this year. The study, titled "Light Without the Poison- Putting an End to Mercury Escape from CFL Bulbs", aims to understand better how used CFLs are handled in India; the stages of dismantling and recycling of CFL; the stakeholders involved in CFL disposal; and the awareness level and attitude of the stakeholders towards safe handling of CFLs. The study also proposes to develop a model for the safe disposal and recycling of CFLs in Delhi. This model can be replicated across the country with minor adjustments to account for the price of CFL components in local areas.

Key findings of the survey:

