

Aseptic Carton Recycling Rates Improving Despite Rising Consumption, Reveals TERI Study

Category: Business

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India has made significant strides in recycling used beverage cartons, with rates more than doubling over the past decade, according to the sixth edition of the **Used Beverage Carton (UBC) Management Study** released by **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**. Commissioned by **Tetra Pak**, the study tracks over 15 years of progress across the surveyed cities, offering a comprehensive view of India's journey towards circularity.



Launch of Used Beverage Carton (UBC) Management Study at the conference themed Closing the Loop: Advancing Carton Recycling for a Circular Economy

Recycling of post-consumer cartons has seen a significant rise, with the latest study showing an increase from **29% in 2011 to 63.66% in 2025** across 24 surveyed cities. When extrapolated to a national level, this translates to a **48% recycling rate for India**. This progress is largely attributed to sustained efforts by Tetra Pak and the broader industry – ranging from investments in collection infrastructure and partnerships with recyclers to widespread consumer awareness campaigns.

In comparison, the previous study published 2022 reported a **62% recycling rate across 22 cities**, which extrapolated to **45% nationally**. The current findings reflect continued momentum, even in the face of rising consumption. When extrapolated nationally, the study estimates that one in every two cartons

in India is now being recycled, marking a major milestone in waste management.

The highlights of the study were presented by Dr. Suneel Pandey, Director, Circular Economy and Waste Management Division, TERI. Key insights from the study include:

- **Recycling rates have increased to 63.66% in 2025** across 24 surveyed cities
- Cities like **Lucknow, Pune, and Bengaluru** show very high recycling rates, supported by robust collection centres and active recycler networks.
- The volume of cartons recycled in a pure stream has increased over time, thanks to strengthened dedicated collection and recycling systems.
- A growing network of **Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), substations, and waste dealers** is contributing to improved collection and recycling outcomes.

Cassio Simoes, Managing Director, Tetra Pak South Asia, added, *"These findings reaffirm that long-term partnerships and consistent investment can deliver real environmental impact. While it's encouraging that nearly half of all cartons are now recycled, our ambition is to go further – to ensure every carton finds its way to a recycler. Together with our partners, we remain committed to advancing circularity and strengthening the recycling value chain across India."*

TERI recommends further actions to boost recycling

- Innovate new products from recycled cartons to expand end-use markets.

- Strengthen the waste dealer network with better economic incentives.
- Enhance paper mill capacity and technology to process multi-material packaging.
- Promote source-level segregation and awareness to improve collection efficiency.
- Strengthen the EPR policy framework to catalyze more investment from industry.

The report was launched at a conference titled “**Closing the Loop: Advancing Carton Recycling for a Circular Economy.**” The event focused on strengthening India’s beverage carton recycling ecosystem and identifying collaborative pathways to accelerate circularity.

The keynote address was delivered by **Mr. N. Subrahmanyam, Scientist ‘E’, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**, who remarked, *“The recycling system is bound to improve – from collection to recycling – as producers increasingly invest a portion of their revenues to purchase EPR certificates. This revenue will enable recyclers to adopt more advanced technologies and improve overall recycling efficiency.”*

Sharing a global perspective on beverage carton recycling, **Ms. Kinga Sieradzon, Vice President, Sustainability Operations, Tetra Pak**, emphasized, *“Social Responsibility and Extended Producer Responsibility are not just about ticking boxes. It is about real transformation – getting engaged and collaborating to transform the entire value chain of collection and recycling.”*

Two thematic panel discussions formed the core of the dialogue. The first, moderated by Mr. Jaideep Gokhale, CEO of the Action Alliance for Recycling Beverage Cartons, brought together entrepreneurs and industry leaders to deliberate strategies for scaling UBC recycling through collaboration, technological innovation, and infrastructure development. The second panel focused on policy direction, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and industry collaboration as key enablers to mainstream circular practices and drive large-scale implementation.

The report combines scientific rigour with on-ground insights, mapping collection flows, analysing formal and informal sector dynamics, and quantifying recycling rates. It serves as a data-backed roadmap for accelerating India's transition to a more inclusive, circular, and low-carbon future.

Access the full report here: [Used Beverage Cartons Management Study 2025](#).

