

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 198
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 08.12.2022

Critical environmental issues related to plastic

198. DR. SUMER SINGH SOLANKI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether plastic has become the most critical environmental issue today;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the measures being taken by Government to deal with this serious issue?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) and (b): Unmanaged and littered plastic waste has adverse impacts on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. As per Annual Report of CPCB for the year 2019-20, the plastic waste generation in the country has 34.69 lakh tonnes per annum (TPA) during the year 2019-20 of which approximately 15.8 Lakh TPA of plastic waste was recycled, and 1.67 Lakh TPA was co-processed in cement kilns.

(c): The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, provides the statutory framework for plastic waste management in an environmentally sound manner throughout the country. Considering the adverse effect of littered single use plastic items on terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems, the Ministry notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on 12th August 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, from 1st July 2022. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Guidelines on the Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging vide Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022, on 16th February, 2022.

The ban on identified single use plastic items and implementation of extended producer responsibility on plastic packaging will lead to reduction in pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste. All thirty-six States/UTs have constituted the Special Task Force under the chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary / Administrator for elimination of identified single use plastic items and effective plastic waste management. A National Level Taskforce has also been constituted by the Ministry in this regard. Under Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0, additional Central Assistance is provided to States and Union Territories for solid waste management including plastic waste management in urban and rural areas.

Directions have been issued under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for setting up of institutional mechanism for enforcement of provisions of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 to all State Pollution Control Boards / Pollution Control Committees. Directions have also been issued to E-commerce companies, leading single use plastic sellers/users, and plastic raw material manufacturers with respect to phasing out of identified single use plastic items.

A National Expo on eco-alternatives to banned single use plastics items and Conference of Startups - 2022 was organized jointly with Government of Tamil Nadu in Chennai on 26-27th September 2022. More than 150 manufacturers of eco-alternatives from across the country are participating in the Expo. The eco-alternatives included material made from sea-weed, bagasse, rice and wheat bran, rice stubble, plant and agricultural residue, banana and areca leaves, jute and cloth.

The following online platforms were launched on 5th April 2022 for effective monitoring of ban on identified single use plastic items and plastic waste management in the country (i) National Dashboard on for monitoring of comprehensive action plan implementation, (ii) Centralized online Portal for Extended Producer Responsibility implementation, (iii) CPCB Monitoring Module for Compliance on Elimination of Single Use Plastic, and (iv) CPCB Grievance Redressal App. The Central Government through various central ministries and government agencies has been involved in generating public awareness on clean environment including plastic waste management and elimination of single-use plastics.
