

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2312
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2025

Impact of microplastics

2312. SMT. RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

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

- (a) whether there are any ongoing or planned studies by Government to assess the health risks associated with microplastics exposure as recent studies indicate the possibility of microplastics blocking blood circulation in the brain, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the steps to increase funding for research and other initiatives or schemes which have been implemented; and
- (c) whether there are any plans to introduce stricter regulations on plastic products that are more prone to fragmenting into microplastics, such as synthetic fibres, single-use plastics, and microbeads in personal care products, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (c): The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) – National Institute for Research in Environmental Health (NIREH) has done a systematic review of studies on presence of microplastics in human body. As per findings of the systematic review, microplastics' dose response and toxicity exposure studies are currently lacking. Separately, a Committee comprising of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), ICMR, Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology (CIPET), National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), under the coordination of CPCB, submitted a report to the National Green Tribunal noting that there are studies about the presence of microplastics in human body but not about their physiological or psychological impact on humans.

In order to reduce pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste, which includes microplastics, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has already prohibited identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, with effect from 1 July 2022. Further, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has also notified the Guidelines on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic packaging vide Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022, on 16th February, 2022. The Guidelines stipulate mandatory targets on EPR, recycling of plastic packaging waste, reuse of rigid plastic packaging and use of recycled plastic content. The guidelines provide for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging and reducing the plastic foot print. Already, 114 lakh

tonnes of plastic packaging waste has been recycled, after the EPR Guidelines have come into force in 2022.

Further, vide Amendment No. 2, of Indian Standard IS 4707 (Part 2): 2017, Classification of Cosmetic Raw Materials and Adjuncts (*Fourth Revision*) notified in November 2017, under Annex A at Sr. No. 1373 it has stated that Plastic microbeads: 5 mm or less, water insoluble, solid plastic particles used to exfoliate or cleanse in rinse-off personal care products are not recognized as safe for use in Cosmetics. The raw materials specified in Annex A of the Indian Standard IS: 4707 Part 2, as amended from time to time, shall not be added in cosmetic product, as per the Cosmetics Rules issued under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
