

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3150
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2023

Pollution by Plastics

3150. SHRI RAKESH SINGH:

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

- (a) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to stop the excessive use of plastic with an objective to improve the environment condition in the country;
- (b) whether there is any visible improvement in the environment condition in the country as a result of the above steps and whether any success has been achieved in this regard to make India a plastic free country, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether wrapping papers used for packing of food items and polythene bags are being recycled to manufacture other items;
- (d) if so, whether the Government proposes to extend it to cover other plastic items also for recycling purpose; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (e): Identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, have already been prohibited, with effect from 1st July, 2022, vide Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 notified on 12th August 2021. The notification also prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of plastic carry bags having thickness less than seventy-five microns with effect from 30th September 2021, and having thickness less than thickness of one hundred and twenty microns with effect from the 31st December, 2022

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change 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. The implementation of ban on identified single use plastic items coupled with extended producer responsibility on plastic packaging will reduce pollution caused by littered and unmanaged plastic waste.

Presently, a total of 6186 of Producers, Importers and Brand Owners have been registered on the Centralized Online Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Portal on Plastic Packaging.

The registered PIBOs cumulatively have around 2.32 Million Tons of plastic packaging covered under Extended Producer Responsibility for the year 2022-23, which also includes plastic packaging used for packing food. Further, 1715 plastic waste processors are also registered on the EPR portal with cumulative plastic waste processing capacity of 17 million tonnes per annum.

Further, to develop alternatives to banned single use plastics the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organized, “India Plastic Challenge – Hackathon 2021” for startups and students of colleges and Universities. Two startups which developed alternative packaging material were awarded. One start up developed a completely biodegradable alternative to thermocol from paddy straw waste. The other startup developed packaging material using seaweeds.

In order to provide assistance to MSME enterprises transitioning away from single use plastic items to eco-alternatives, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises has made provisions in their ongoing schemes. 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 to raise awareness on alternatives. Awareness generation and capacity building programmes have been organized for elimination of single use plastics. More than 150 manufacturers of eco-alternatives from across the country are participating in the Expo. The Eco-alternatives were made from coir, bagasse, rice and wheat bran, plant and agricultural residue, banana and areca leaves, jute and cloth.
