

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION No. *86
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.11.2019

Green Alternatives of Plastics

*86. SHRI DUSHYANT SINGH:

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

- (a) whether the Government has set up or proposes to set up specific research fund or a global contest for developing ecologically sustainable and green alternatives of plastics;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has any other schemes to promote research for ecologically sustainable and green alternatives of plastics; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (d): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (d) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 86 to be answered on Friday, the 22nd November, 2019 on “Green Alternatives of Plastics” by Shri Dushyant Singh

(a) and (b) With the revolution of the Indian economy in 1991, Urban India embraced consumerism and a demand for products has also been emerged. Among the various factors driving this growth, one of the most significant factor is increasing use of plastics by the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Due to its durability, strength, inert behavior and low cost, plastic emerged as one of the most reliable packaging material for the industries. As an outcome, the increase in demand for plastic has indirectly resulted into the challenge of plastic waste management.

Due to various positive factors including cheap cost associated with plastic packaging, finding an ecologically sustainable and green alternative to plastic is a challenging task. However, with an objective to ensure the sound management of plastic waste, Ministry has already started taking initiatives, for effective management of plastic waste in the country.

The Government has notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. As per the Rules, the generators of waste have been mandated to take steps to minimize generation of plastic waste, not to litter the plastic waste, ensure segregated storage of waste at source and handover segregated waste to local bodies or agencies authorised by the local bodies. The Rules further mandate that the plastic waste, which can be recycled, shall be channelized to registered plastic waste recycler and recycling of plastic shall conform to the Indian Standard: IS 14534:1998. The local bodies to encourage the use of plastic waste (preferably the plastic waste which cannot be further recycled) for road construction as per Indian Road Congress guidelines or energy recovery or waste to oil etc. The rules mandate the producers, importers and brand owners to work out modalities for waste collection system based on the principle of Extended Producer Responsibility.

Further, the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 defines the norms for compostable plastic as an ecologically sustainable and green alternatives of plastics. The Rules prohibit the use of plastic bags with thickness less than 50 microns. However, the provision of thickness is not applicable to carry bags made up of compostable plastic. The carry bags made from compostable plastics has to conform to the Indian Standard: IS 17088:2008 titled as Specifications for Compostable Plastics.

Further, an expert group has been constituted by Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET) with respect to research and development for Compostable/Biodegradable technology on Plastic.

(c) and (d) Considering the high environmental costs associated with management of single-use plastics, particularly the adverse effect on marine environment, and the need for a definitive response supplementing actions undertaken by various States/UTs to combat

single-use plastic pollution, Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced India's pledge to phase out Single-use plastic by 2022.

As pronounced by Hon'ble Prime Minister, the Ministry is working on the principle of 6R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Redesign and Remanufacture.) to combat with plastic pollution. In this perspective and to promote ecologically sustainable and green alternatives of plastics, the Ministry has subsequently issued "Standard Guidelines on Single Use Plastic" with suggested different set of actions for State/UT Government to minimize the usage of single use plastics. The guidelines suggest alternatives to SUP, such as jute bags, cloth bags, paper bags as an alternative to plastic carry bags. Similarly, sufficient alternatives available for the plastic cutlery such as paper plates and leaf plates, paper/earthen cups and glass, wooden spoons, paper straws, multi-layered (aluminum + paper) pouches in place of container and container lids, wooden trays, stirrers made of wood. Apart from the traditional material, the new material like bagasse based products, banana stem based products are widely available in market.

An easy replacement is available for ear buds sticks, balloons sticks, flags, candies etc made of plastic. For the portion of plastic in the these items, wood/bamboo/paper etc is the easily available option. The PVC materials which are commonly used for flex, banners and posters are hazard to health and environment. Alternatively, cloth banner, lightweight textile fabric, wrinkle resistant warp knit, natural fibre-based sandwich board, resin-infused paper, partial boards can be used.
