

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 880
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07.02.2022

Plastic Pollution

880. SHRI PRASUN BANERJEE:

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

- (a) the steps taken by the Government to stop the plastic pollution; and
- (b) whether the Government has any policy to introduce gunny bags instead of plastic bags for storing food grains?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b): The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, as amended, provide the statutory framework for plastic waste management in an environmentally sound manner throughout the country. The Rules prohibits manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags and plastic sheets less than fifty microns in thickness in the country. There is complete ban on sachets using plastic material used for storing, packing or selling gutkha, tobacco and pan masala. The Rules also provide measures for recycling of plastic waste and its end of life disposal in an environmentally sound manner.

Considering the adverse effect on littered single use plastic items on terrestrial, aquatic and marine ecosystems, the Ministry has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, vide GSR NO. 571 (E) on 12th August 2021, in the Gazette of India, prohibiting identified single use plastic items, which have low utility and high littering potential, by 1st July 2022.

As far as, plastic carry bags are concerned, the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, 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. Further, over and above the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, thirty four states/UTs have issued notifications/orders to introduce regulations pertaining to complete or partial ban on plastic carry bags and/or identified single-use plastic items.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the draft Regulations on the Extended Producer Responsibility for plastic packaging under Plastic

Waste Management Rules, 2016, as amended from time to time, in the Gazette of India vide GSR No. 722 (E) on 6th October, 2021 for public consultation. As per the draft notification, the producer, Importers & brand-owners respectively shall ensure minimum level of recycling (excluding end of life disposal) of plastic packaging waste collected under Extended Producer Responsibility. The enforceable prescription of minimum level of recycling of plastic packaging waste collected under Extended Producer Responsibility to producer, Importers & brand-owners in the draft notification will further strengthen circular economy of plastic packaging waste.

Bags made of alternative materials to plastic such as jute has been used for packaging food grains. The Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory Use in packaging Commodities) Act, 1987 authorize the Government of India to reserve certain commodities or class of commodities for compulsory packaging in jute packaging material in the interest of jute economy. During the Jute Year 2020 – 2021, food grains and sugar were reserved for packaging in jute material.
