



BAN ON PLASTIC WASTE FOR AN UNCLOGGED FUTURE

A Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB, 2019-20) report estimated that 3.5 million metric tonnes of plastic waste are generated in India annually. In order to mitigate the everlasting plastic pollution issue, India has banned the manufacture, stocking, import, distribution, sale, and use of single-use plastic (SUP) all over the country since

July 1st, 2022 .



RECENT AMENDMENTS TO THE PLASTIC BAN PLEDGE

(MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, 2022)



- 2021- The Plastic Waste Management and Handling rules (2011) urged manufacturers to shift from a 40-micron thickness to a 50-micron thickness.
- 2022- The government decided to increase the thickness to 75 microns and ban 50-micron plastic production.
- 2023- The plan is to shift to a 120-micron thickness of plastic. The motive behind increasing the thickness is in anticipation that thicker plastics will become more valuable and visible to be picked from dumpsites and streets for reusability.

LIST OF SINGLE USE PLASTICS BANNED

(MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE, 2022) THE LIST OF BANNED ITEMS INCLUDES

- Earbuds with plastic sticks
- Plastic sticks for balloons
- Plastic flags
- Candy sticks
- Ice-cream sticks
- Polystyrene (thermocool) for decoration
- Plastic plates
- Cups
- Glasses



- Cutlery (such as forks, spoons, knives, straws, trays, etc.)
- Wrapping or packing films (around sweet boxes, invitation cards, cigarette packets)
- Plastic or PVC banners less than 100 microns
- Stirrers

HOW INDIA RESPONDED TO THE PLASTIC BAN

- PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, Parle Agro, Dabur, and Amul had requested for plastic straws to be exempted from the ban which was not accepted by the CPCB. As a result, Dabur India and Parle Agro are attempting to replace plastic straws with imported paper straws (Economic Times, 2020)
- Maharashtra has become the first state in the country to implement a 100% “no-single use plastic” state (Economic Times, 2020).
- 650 Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) units in Halol, Gujarat have shut down due to the single-use plastic ban (KNN, 2022).
- CPCB launched an app where a complaint can be lodged by scanning single-use plastic litter. There is a prescribed punishment for violators, mandated by the Environmental Ministry of India (CPCB, 2022).



VIEWS OF EXPERTS¹

In an interview with PrintWeek (2022), these experts shared their take on the plastic ban-

- **Saurabh Agarwal**, senior director, and general manager, (Label & Packaging Materials-South Asian division) Avery Dennison, quotes, “The government’s decision to implement a ban on single-use plastic is a welcome move since it supports the green initiative of curbing pollution and health hazards and leads to environmental sustainability. We would need to invest in research and development and look for more innovative technologies to develop alternative products.”
- **Dia Mirza** (Goodwill ambassador at UNEP, UN Secretary Generals Advocate for SDGs, Wildlife Trust Of India) tweeted, “This single-use plastic (SUP) is ours now to implement. Let’s do our bit to ensure we refuse all SUPs.”
- **Dr. Ravindra Khaiwal** (PGIMER, Chandigarh professor working on ‘Better earth for all’), said, “Banning single-use plastics impacts our health. Plastics degrade into microplastics after entering the ecosystem. These microplastics act as a platform for the growth of pathogenic microorganisms. And we could do without pathogens.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of the plastic ban will not proliferate single-handedly by the government, the common public needs to hop on to support the mitigation strategy.

- Research is required to find a cheap and reliable alternative for plastics and polythene.
- An organized plastic waste management system needs to be formulated.
- The ban needs to take into account more plastic products as single-use plastics only make up 2%-3% of the total plastic waste generated in India.
- The plastic ban is still not proliferating in the expected pace, the word needs to be propagated at an individual level.
- Alternative products from companies could be a way forward in the promotion of the ban on the use of plastics.
- Awareness of the masses is of utmost importance.

THE WAY FORWARD

- Discouraging the use of plastic in our everyday lives.
- Educational institutions and workspaces can promote a strict 'no-plastic' policy.
- Application of the plastic ban on all the manufacturing units.

The ban on plastic waste by the Government of India is a step towards a plastic-free future that will help us in combating climate change. The public and the government need to work in synergy to elevate India from drowning in plastic waste.

