

Ban on Single Use Plastic in India: Step towards Clean India, Green India

Background

- Hon'ble Prime Minister announced India's pledge to phase out Single Use Plastics by 2022 during World Environment Day on June 5, 2018
- Hon'ble Prime Minister pitched for freedom for India from SUP in his 2019 Independence Day speech

Plastic Waste Management in India

The Plastic Waste Management Rules (PWMR), 2016, provides the statutory framework for plastic waste management in an environmentally sound manner throughout the country vide notification number GSR 320 (E). The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on August 12, 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic items from July 1, 2022 and its letter to the concern Principal Secretaries vide office memo dated 30.06.22 clarifies the list of banning of SUP.

Definition: “ Single-use plastic commodity” means a plastic item intended to be used once for the same purpose before being disposed of or recycled. Means, Plastics which are not reused or recycled after its first use may be termed as single used plastic (SUP) .

Adverse Impact of single used Plastics:-

- 1) **Environmental Impact**--The single use plastic is believed to take thousands of years to decompose, which leads to soil and water contamination and can pose hazards for land, water and wildlife. In some cases, the existence of single use plastic in water or food is leading to presence of micro plastics in human body and creating health issues.
- 2) **Economic Impact**-- The littering of plastic is visually unattractive and has potential to impact gross domestic product (GDP) of countries dependent on tourism. The plastic pollution in oceans has economic impact across tourism, shipping and fishing industries. Other than this sustainable plastic waste management can move plastic from 'waste' to 'Wealth.'
- 3) **Health & Social Impact**-- Instances of open burning of plastic waste lead to air pollution. The littering at open spaces such as parks lead to welfare losses which accounts as indirect social cost of plastic Pollution.

Identified single use items which are banned include:

- Ear buds with plastic sticks
- Plastic sticks for balloons
- Plastic flags
- Candy sticks
- Ice-cream sticks
- Polystyrene (Thermocol) for decoration
- Plastic plates
- Cups, glasses, cutlery such as forks, spoons, knives, straw & trays
- Wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes, Invitation cards, Cigarette packets.
- Plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers

MoEF&CC issued notification regarding minimum thickness of carry bags and Plastic Sheets:-

- Carry bag made of virgin or recycled plastic, shall not be less than 75 microns in thickness with effect from the 30th September, 2021 120 microns in thickness with effect from the 31st December, 2022. Non-woven plastic carry bag shall not be less than 60 Gram Per Square Meter (GSM) with effect from the 30th September, 2021.

Defination:- “Carry Bags Mean Bags made from plastic materials used for purpose of carrying or dispensing commodities which have a self –carrying capacity feature but do not includes bags that constitute or form intergral part of the packaging in which goods are sealed prior to use”

And

- Plastic sheet or like, which is not an integral part of multi-layered packaging and cover made of plastic sheet used for packaging, wrapping the commodity shall not be less than fifty microns in thickness except where the thickness of such plastic sheets impair the functionality of the product. (Definition needs to be clarified by Concern authorities as different people have different interpretation).

Definition :- Plastic Packaging means packaging material made by using plastics for preserving, Protecting, storing and transporting of products in a variety of ways whereas Plastic sheets means Plastic sheets is the sheet made of plastic.

(NOTE— Public notice issued by PCB Assam dated 29th June'22 and CPCB notification Dated 30th June'22)

Keeping in view of NGT order Oct 2020, CPCB had formulated the comprehensive guidelines on December 2020 for Levy of EC under PWM rule 2016 for non –Compliance as mentioned below.

- 1) Carry Bags made up of virgin or recycled plastic should confirm the specified thickness.
- 2) Plastic sheet or like, which is not an integral part of multi-layered packaging and cover made of plastic sheet used for packaging, wrapping the commodity shall not be less than fifty microns in thickness except where the thickness of such plastic sheets impair the functionality of the product.
- 3) The Manufacturer should not supply, sale or arrange to be used as raw Materials to a producer not having Valid Licence under PWM rule.

After the representation by Laghu Udyog Bharti to Hon'ble Minister of Environment certain clarification and amendments have come out on 07.07.22 regarding use of Plastic Cups & trays as plastic packaging in Food/ Dairy/ Beverages/Bakery Industries giving relief to many users & producers.

On 06.07.2022 MoEFCC also came up with certain amendments mostly related to definition, registration etc.

For Latest updates, it is advisable to be in touch with Concern Department, website or experts.

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