

Concern's with Regulating Plastic Ban

What is the issue?

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- In recent times use of plastic become the major threat to the environment.

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- India lacks proper framework mechanisms to discourage plastic use.

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What are the concerns with plastic usage in India?

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- India is the major producer of plastic waste that ends up in the oceans.

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- The Centre's somewhat liberal estimate shows over 60% of about 25,000 tonnes of plastic waste generated daily is collected.

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- That essentially means a staggering 10,000 tonnes of trash is being released into the environment, a lot of it is going into the sea.

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- Also, not every piece of plastic collected by the system is scientifically processed.

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- Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna river system is on the UN map of 10 rivers worldwide that collectively carry the bulk of the plastic waste into the oceans.

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- The effects are evident that they threaten marine life and the well-being of people, as microplastics are now found even in drinking water.

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What are the pitfalls with measures taken?

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- In their response to the crisis, communities and environmentally minded individuals are ahead of governments and municipal authorities.

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- They segregate waste, compost at home, conduct “plastic free” social events and help recover materials that would otherwise just be dumped in the suburbs and wetlands.

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- But, valuable as they are, voluntary efforts cannot achieve what systemic reform can.

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- India’s Solid Waste Management Rules and the Plastic Waste Management Rules of 2016, which built on previous regulations, mostly remain on paper.

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- State governments have simply not given them the necessary momentum, and the producers of plastic articles that are invariably used just for a few minutes have shown little concern about their negative environmental impact.

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- Local bodies mandated under rules to ensure segregation, collection and transfer of waste to registered recyclers have spectacularly failed to fulfil their responsibilities.

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What measures need to be taken?

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- It is the Centre’s responsibility to ensure that the Environment (Protection) Act, the overarching law that enables anti-pollution rules to be issued, is implemented in letter and spirit.

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- Ideally, regulation should help stop the manufacture of single-use plastic articles such as carry bags and cutlery, and encourage the use of biodegradable materials.

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- The provisions of the Plastic Waste Management Rules require manufacturers of compostable bags to get a certificate from the Central Pollution Control Board.

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Source: The Hindu

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