

## Plastic waste management - A responsibility

### Why in News?

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has pulled up 52 companies for not specifying a timeline or plan to collect the plastic waste that they generate.

### What is the current situation?

- The companies that have been pulled up include Amazon, Flipkart, Patanjali Ayurved Limited, etc.,
- CPCB has warned these companies, stating that they hadn't yet registered at the online portal and disclosed their disposal plans.

### What is the basis for these actions?

- These companies are pulled up because they haven't followed the norms under the,
  1. Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (amended in 2018)
  2. Environment Protection Act, 1986
- The CPCB also stated that failing to do so would invite action against the defaulters which may include fines or imprisonment.

### What does the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 aim to?

- **Increase minimum thickness** of plastic carry bags and sheets from 40 to 50 microns.
- **Expand the jurisdiction of applicability** from the municipal area to rural areas.
- **Extended producers' responsibility** - To bring in the responsibilities of producers and generators, both in plastic waste management system and to introduce collect back system of plastic waste by the producers/brand owners.
- **Collection of plastic waste management fee** through pre-registration of the producers, importers of plastic carry bags/multi layered packaging and vendors selling the same.
- **Gainful utilization of waste** - By promoting use of plastic waste for road construction or energy recovery, or waste to oil etc.
- **Responsibility on waste generators** - To pay user charge as prescribed by local authority, collection and handing over of waste by the institutional

generator, event organizers.

- **Responsibility of local bodies and Gram Panchayat** - To set up, operationalise and co-ordinate the waste management system.
- **Responsibility of retailers and street vendors** - To not sell, or provide commodities to consumers in carry bags, or plastic sheet, or multi layered packaging.

### What can be done?

- The solutions can be **packaging innovation** and **upscaling waste segregation**, collection and transmission.
- **Recovering materials** from garbage should be a high priority, considering that India is the third highest consumer of materials.
- **Recycling** plastics extends their life and provides a substitute for virgin material. But recyclable waste is shouldn't be mixed with other articles.
- **Making** municipal and pollution control **authorities accountable** is also equally important.

### What can online retailers do?

- Online retailers have not felt compelled to take back the plastic articles inside cardboard boxes.
- These companies can **form waste cooperatives** in India, employing informal waste-pickers.
- In such a model, consumers will respond readily if they are incentivised to return segregated plastic waste.

**Source: The Hindu**

### Quick Facts

#### Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

- It was enacted in 1986 with the main objective to provide the **protection and improvement of environment** and for matters connected therewith.
- **Objectives** of the act are,
  1. To implement the decisions of UN Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm, 1972.
  2. To enact a general law on the areas of environmental protection which were left uncovered by existing laws.
  3. To co-ordinate activities of the various regulatory agencies under the

existing laws.

4. To provide for the creation of an authority or authorities for environmental protection.
5. To provide a deterrent punishment to those who endanger human environment, safety and health.



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