

## Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021

### Why in news?

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, prohibiting identified single use plastic (SUP) items by 2022.

### What are single-use plastics?

- They are plastics that are used just once, as in disposable packaging and products.
- They are made primarily from fossil fuel-based chemicals (petrochemicals) and are meant to be disposed of right after use (in minutes).
- They are most commonly used for packaging and serviceware

### What is the impact:?

- Low utility but high littering potential.
- Large and growing volume adds enormously to the total plastic waste.
- Adverse impacts on both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

### What are the concerns:in India?

- 22 States have, in the past, announced a ban on SUP, but waste choking wetlands and waterways (and being transported to the oceans to turn into [microplastic](#)) still continue.
- Lack of proper waste segregation leading to difficulties in recycling:-34 lakh tonnes of plastic waste generated in 2019-20 in India; only about 60% is recycled.
- Nearly 43% of India's plastics are used in packaging and much of it is SUP.

### What are the key provisions in the Amendment Rules?

- **Prohibition** of manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of SUP, including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene, commodities from the 1st July, 2022. This covers -
  1. ear buds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene [Thermocol] for decoration
  2. plates, cups, glasses, cutlery, wrapping or packing films around sweet boxes
  3. invitation cards, cigarette packets, plastic or PVC banners less than 100 micron, stirrers
- **Thickness** of plastic carry bags to be increased from 50 microns -
  1. to 75 microns from 30th September, 2021
  2. to 120 microns from the 31st December, 2022
- This is to stop littering due to lightweight plastic carry bags, and allow their reuse.
- **Guidelines for Extended Producer Responsibility/EPR**(as per Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016) has been given legal force through the 2021 Rules, for effective implementation.
- EPR - Environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of a product's life cycle.
- Accordingly, collection and management of plastic packaging waste, which is not covered

under the phase-out of identified SUP items, through the EPR of the Producer, Importer and Brand owner (PIBO).

- **Other measures** for elimination of single use plastics and effective implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016:

1. A Special Task Force by States/UTs
2. National Level Taskforce by the Union MoEFCC for taking coordinated efforts
3. Strengthening of waste management infrastructure in the States/UTs through the Swachh Bharat Mission.
4. Comprehensive action plans by State/UT Governments and concerned Central Ministries/Departments
5. Establishment of institutional mechanism in all States/UTs as per direction issued under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
6. Awareness generation
7. India Plastic Challenge-Hackathon 2021 for Higher Educational Institutions' students and Startups for developing alternatives to identified SUP items and digital solutions to plastic waste management.

- Notably, in the 4th UN Environment Assembly held in 2019, India had piloted a resolution on addressing single-use plastic products pollution.

**Source: PIB, The Hindu**

