

Challenges in SINGLE - USE PLASTIC BAN

Context

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021 on August 12, 2021.
- In keeping with the 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' spirit, the country is taking steps to curb littered and unmanaged plastic waste pollution.
- Since July 1, 2022, India has banned the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of single-use plastic (SUP) items with low utility and high littering potential.

Why are single-use plastics harmful?

- 1** The purpose of single-use plastics is to use them once or for a short period before disposing of them.
- 2** Plastic waste has drastic impacts on the environment and human health. There is a greater likelihood of single-use plastic products ending up in the sea than reusable ones.
- 3** India has taken resolute steps to mitigate pollution caused by littered single-use plastics.

What is the impact on the environment?

- Littered single-use plastic items hurt both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. All countries face a major environmental challenge due to pollution caused by single-use plastic items.

What is the role of the manufacturer?

In addition, the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2022 on February 16, 2022.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is the responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.

The guidelines provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste, promote the development of new alternatives to plastic packaging and provide the next steps for moving towards sustainable plastic packaging by businesses.

What are the challenges?

- The ban will succeed only if all stakeholders participate enthusiastically and engage in effective engagement and concerted actions.
- However, if we look back at our past, almost 25 Indian States previously banned plastic at the state level. However, these bans had a very limited impact in reality because of the widespread use of these items.
- Now the challenge is to see how the local level authorities will enforce the ban by the guidelines.

What's happening on the research and development front?

- Finding alternatives to plastic seems a little difficult, however, greener alternatives to plastic may be considered a sustainable option. For example, compostable and bio-degradable plastic, etc.

