

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:63

ANSWERED ON:08.07.2009

BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS

Reddy Shri K. Jayasurya Prakash;Swamygowda Shri N Cheluvaraya Swamy

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has assessed the extent of damage caused to the environment by plastic waste in the country;
- (b) if so, the outcome thereof; and
- (c) the details of the steps taken/being taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (c) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (c) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 63 FOR ANSWER ON WEDNESDAY, THE 8 JULY, 2009 REGARDING BAN ON PLASTIC BAGS RAISED BY SHRI K.J. S.P. REDDY AND SHRIN. CHALUVARAYA SWAMY

(a) & (b) Issues related to environmental hazards posed by plastic waste have been assessed by several committees. The problem created by the use of plastics bags is primarily due to shortcomings in the waste management system. Indiscriminate littering of used plastic bags and recycled/coloured plastic bags containing certain chemical additives may pose environmental problems including choking open drains, ground water contamination, etc. Plastic itself is a chemically inert substance, used world-wide for packaging and is not per-se hazardous to health and environment. Recycling of plastic, if carried out as per approved procedures and guidelines, may not be an environmental or health hazard.

(c) The Government has notified Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 (amended in 2003) to regulate the use and manufacture of plastics carry bags, containers and recycling of plastics wastes. As per these rules:

- (i) Carry bags and containers made of virgin plastic shall be in natural shade or white.
- (ii) No person shall manufacture, stock, distribute or sell carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic bags which are less than less than 8" x 12" in size and 20 micron in thickness,
- (iii) No vendor shall use carry bags or containers made of recycled plastic for storing, carrying, dispensing, or packaging of food stuffs,
- (iv) Carry bags and containers made of recycled plastic and used for purpose other than storing and packaging foodstuffs shall be manufactured as per the specifications of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS),
- (v) The recycling of plastics shall be undertaken in accordance with specifications of the BIS.
- (vi) Manufacturing and recycling of plastic wastes is to be undertaken only by units registered with State Pollution Control Boards/ Committees.

Several States have prescribed stricter norms with regard to thickness of plastic carry bags ranging from 30 to 70 microns. Some States have banned the use of plastic bags in certain religious, tourist or public places.