

Presentation to
Expert Committee to define
“Single-Use Plastics (SUP)”



Indian Centre for Plastics in the Environment (ICPE)

www.icpe.in

Delhi, 9th, May 2019



Outcome of

Multi-Stakeholders' Consultation

Plastic Packaging & "Single Use Plastics"

held on Thursday, The 04th April, 2019, New Delhi

Coverage – Representative Few



Consumer / NGO / Activist (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer Guidance Society • Ocean Foundation – Afroz Shah • Indian Pollution Control Association • Almitra Patel
User Industry / Brand Owners (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amul • Coca Cola • Nestle • HUL • ITC
Plastic Industry & Associations (8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essel Propack • Uflex • Premier Polyfilm • OPPI, AIPMA, GSPMA, Plexconcil
Academic (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IIT- Delhi, IIP, CIPET
Raw Material Producers (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIL, GAIL, HMEL
Government / Regulators (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoEF&CC • UNDP • MHUD • Drinking Water & Sanitation • BIS

~ 63 participants representing wide range of stake-holders

Points For Deliberation



- What constitutes “Single Use Plastics” (SUP).
- Impact of SUP phase out on stakeholders – users, brand owners, retailers, consumers and industry.
- Alternatives to SUP – technical feasibility, environmental footprints & economic viability.
- Innovation opportunities in materials, package design for promoting recycling and waste management.
- Role of stake holders in addressing plastic waste challenge

Synopsis of Proceedings



- Plastics critical in supplementing and complimenting natural resources, saving energy, reducing losses and hence, current tirade against it may be misplaced.
- While acknowledging the benefits of plastic, mis-managed waste is to be accepted as a major global concern.
- All stakeholders, including consumers, have to take responsibility.
- Banning a product generally is not advisable unless it proves to be a major hazard.
- UN guidelines recommends developing viable alternatives before phasing out any single use plastic products.



Synopsis (.. Contd 1.)

- To ban a product only because we cannot handle waste properly, is like “throwing away baby with bathwater”.
- Two critical principles that should be considered while tackling plastic waste problem:
 - Need to set up efficient and effective solid waste management policy and infrastructure with viability gap funding through EPR .
 - Support upgradation and rejuvenation of the recycling industry.
- In working out EPR, general view was that all the participants in the value chain should participate, though their individual share may differ.

Synopsis (.. Contd. 2.)



- In light of the above broad principles, following specific issues arose during discussions:
 - Few recent notifications from some State Governments have created confusion leading to harassment of trade and consumers.
 - There are some plastic products which cannot be phased out in the absence of viable alternatives. Milk pouch is an example. Replacement with glass is expensive, energy intensive and water guzzling. Bulk vending is impractical on pan India basis.
 - Plastics films used for wrapping of food products increase shelf life (an important criterion for tropical country like India) and prevent wastages.

Synopsis (.. Contd.3)



- Plastic packaging is critical in several drug delivery systems. Such products cannot be replaced at this juncture as there are no viable alternatives.
- Entire retail industry is critically dependent on plastics. These cannot be phased out as SUPs without hurting economy. Attempt should be made to promote “buyback” and recycling, rather than phasing out.
- A broad consensus emerged on phasing out “ **Thin**” Carry bags even-though alternatives like paper / cotton bags will increase environmental footprints.
- May be wiser to strictly enforce ban on carry bags of less than 50 microns or weighing less than 20 grams / each rather than blanket ban on all carry bags.
- MLP offers one of the most cost effective solution for preservation of food and other packed consumer items.

Synopsis (.. Contd.4)



- The very small size pouches, sachets etc. from MLP are difficult to collect even if the producers agree to “buy back”. Restriction, similar to carry bag size / weight, on MLP may be laid down to help collection of waste.
- “Multi-material” MLPs are difficult to recycle. We should promote “films from same / similar family of material” for packaging. This would promote recycling which should be an important criterion for material selection.
- There is an urgent need to stop unnecessary and avoidable packaging like invitation card overwraps.
- Extensive awareness program should be launched as a Public – Private initiative to promote, anti-littering, segregation and proper handling of waste etc. as part of “Swachh Bharat” mission.

Synopsis (.. Contd.5)



- SUPs should be identified in Indian context. Following any western model could be counter-productive.
- Unlike western countries, delivery of safe drinking water is major concern in India. Use of PET bottles is the best means of delivering safe drinking water to consumers. With the development of post consumer PET bottle recycling, there is hardly any presence of PET bottles in MSW stream.
- Societal change, Awareness, Waste Management Infrastructure, Research on materials & Innovation in packaging by Brand Owners , these plans can be announced by public- private responsibilities as country moves ahead.
- Given the array of issues, many cases lack of viable alternatives, perhaps advisable to defer the time line for phasing out SUPs.



Submissions – Way Forward

Observations on SUP

- As per UN report, most common SUPs found in environment in the west are (in order of magnitude): cigarette butts, drink bottles, caps, food wrappers, grocery bags, lids, straws and stirrers and foam take-away containers.
- In Indian context these are less visible in waste stream.
- Plastic drink bottle are mostly collected & recycled (~85% recycled).
- Categorize SUP based on littering intensity & collection difficulties.
- Recommendation from UN – phase out SUPs after there are viable alternatives in place. Time line 2030.
- Robust infrastructure and extensive awareness campaign will reduce leakage of waste into environment.

Concluding Submission

- Categorize SUPs in Indian context based on littering intensity & collection difficulties
- Review / Reflect on SUP phase-out plan.
- **Focus on waste management infrastructure.**
- **Invest in awareness: anti-littering & source segregation.**
- Promote and support recycling, “end-of-life” applications.