

# PLASTIC FREE ENVIRONMENT: GOVERNMENTAL & INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS IN INDIA

Kumar Gaurav,<sup>1</sup> Aman Singh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>LLB 3rd Sem. University School of Law, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh

<sup>2</sup>BALLB (H) 1st Sem. University School of Law, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh

**Corresponding author:** Kumar Gaurav, LLB 3rd Sem. University School of Law, Desh Bhagat University, Mandi Gobindgarh. Email id:kumargaurav12040@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

**“One Nation, One Mission: End Plastic Pollution”** is slogan of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. A Plastic-free environment can only be achieved through joint efforts of government and individuals. While governments frame laws, promote alternatives, and regulate usage, individuals contribute by reducing, reusing, and adopting eco-friendly habits. Together, they pave the way for a cleaner and sustainable future. The research paper focus on the plastic free environment and find out responsibilities of the individuals and government related it. The topic “Plastic-Free Environment” is important because plastic pollution harms soil, water, air, animals, and human health. Discussing it creates awareness about sustainable practices, highlights the role of government policies and individual responsibility, and inspires collective action to protect our planet for future generations.

**Object of the Research Paper:** The main object of this research paper is to examine the environment and social impacts of plastic pollution, evaluate the role of government policies and individual actions, and propose sustainable strategies to move towards a plastic-free environment.

**Methodology:** The research is based on a qualitative approach, using secondary data from books, journals, government reports, and online sources related to plastic pollution and waste management. Comparative analysis of governmental policies and individual practices is carried out to understand their effectiveness. Case studies of successful plastic-free initiatives are also reviewed to suggest practical recommendations.

**Limitation of the Research Paper:** Enforcement Challenges and Infrastructure Gaps for example Recycling plants and waste segregation systems are not available everywhere Rural and semi-urban areas especially lack proper collection facilities.

**Key Words:** Government Policies, Constitution, Right to Clean Environment, Climate Change, Plastic.

## INTRODUCTION

The conceptions on Eco-Friendly and zero waste Celebration aimed at conserving the environment and eliminating plastic waste<sup>1</sup>. It is celebrated by using minimum plastic items. For example – Tribal Solung Festival, Indian's green music festival, Echoes of Earth etc. All these Festivals are based on the Principles of reducing environmentally harmful materials and waste. To avoid single use plastic, It is important to take a step towards safety. We should use such things which do not have any adverse effect on our health and the environment. This is an event that helps us reduce plastic waste, reuse it and save the environment. Eco-Friendly and zero waste celebration that follows the 5 rules of Refuse – Reduce – Reuse – Recycle and Rot (compost) designed to promote. Use of plastic is a very dangerous for us it is against the Sustainable Development Goals 26000 tones plastic waste generated daily basis<sup>2</sup>.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Efforts to create a plastic-free environment in India involve both governmental initiatives and individual actions, reflecting a multi-faceted approach to combat plastic

pollution. The Indian government has implemented various policies, including the 2022 nationwide ban on single-use plastics and the 2016 Plastic Waste Management Rules, aimed at reducing plastic waste at the source and promoting recycling<sup>3</sup> (Mahajan et al., 2025). Additionally, community-driven campaigns like Swachh Sagar Abhiyan have mobilized citizens for coastal clean-ups, highlighting the importance of public participation<sup>4</sup> (Robin et al., 2023). The government has established rules targeting single-use plastics and promoting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) to ensure manufacturers manage plastic waste (Mahajan et al., 2025). Initiatives like Mann Ki Baat by the Prime Minister raise public awareness about plastic pollution and encourage community involvement in clean-up activities (Robin et al., 2023).

**Zero Waste Practices:** Individuals and businesses are adopting zero waste strategies, experimenting with alternatives to plastics, and sharing insights on effective practices<sup>5</sup> (Conlon, 2023). Public awareness regarding the harmful effects of plastic is crucial, as individual

consumption habits significantly influence plastic demand<sup>6</sup> (Singh & Mathur, 2019). Despite these efforts, challenges remain, such as the ingrained use of plastics due to their convenience and the need for more robust waste management systems<sup>7</sup> (“The Social Rendition of Plastic Waste Ma...”, 2023). Addressing these issues requires a sustained commitment from both the government and individuals to foster a culture of sustainability<sup>8</sup>.

## GOVERNMENT ROLE AND POLICIES

### Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016

Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 were notified on 18th March, 2016. These rules apply to the manufacture, import

stocking, distribution, sale and use of carry bags, plastic sheets or multi-layered packaging etc. The jurisdiction of applicability of the rules has been expanded from municipal area to rural areas as well. For the first time, responsibility of waste generators has been prescribed. Individual and bulk generators like offices, commercial establishments, industries are to segregate the plastic waste at source, handover segregated waste, pay user fee as per bye-laws of the local bodies. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to give thrust to Circular Economy, has notified Regulations on market based Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework in respect of following categories of wastes:



**Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**- There rules hold producers responsible for the collection and recycling of plastic waste they put into the market.

**Ban on Single Use plastic (SUP)**- The government has banned several single-use plastic items, although implementation remains a challenge.

**Promoting a circular economy**- Policies aim to stem the flow of plastic waste through recycling and reuse and promote a circular economy for plastic waste.

So far in India, plastic cutlery, straws, plates, cup, polystyrene decorations, plastic bags with thickness less than 75 microns and plastic bags with thickness less than 120 microns have been banned. Which has come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, but these plastics are still seen in use in the markets. However, since the introduction of the ban in 2012, there has been a growing need to strictly enforce regulations and find alternatives to single-use plastic.

## ROLE OF NGO AND COMPANY

**Shri Kalyan Mahila Kalyan Samiti** – It works to make cloth bags in Rajasthan and also works to spread awareness among people about not using plastic bags<sup>9</sup>.

**Recycle India Foundation** – It works in Bengaluru to segregate plastic waste and then recycle it. Recycle India Foundation is an NGO that works for purifying our environment and making our lives better by educating, promoting and working in recycling plastic and E-Wastes. We know that Mother Nature is a gift of humanity which we need to protect and preserve for our future and our upcoming generations. Different types of wastes are destroying our natural habitat which is leading to many major problems such as global warming. Recycle India Foundation stands for looking into such problems which are usually neglected by others. We recycle, re-use non-biodegradable materials and make other people aware, educate and pledge to contribute their time and energy to help protect our nature so that our future may be bright and evergreen<sup>10</sup>.

**Hasiru Dala** – Focuses on socio-economic inclusion of rag pickers.

Basic-sheet is an NGO run by the Delhi Government to convert waste into useful items.

All of these in some way or the other work towards giving proper direction and structure to plastic waste like making cloth bags , raising awareness and helping in waste

management. The Combined efforts of government and individuals have shown positive impacts in reducing plastic usage. Government initiatives such as bans on single-use plastics, promotion of biodegradable alternatives, strict waste management rules, and awareness campaigns have significantly reduced plastic pollution in many regions. On the other hand, individual efforts like adopting reusable bags, bottles, and containers, segregating waste, and participating in clean-up drives have complemented governmental measures. Together, these efforts contribute to:

- Decrease in plastic waste generation
- Improvement in environmental health
- Conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems
- Promotion of sustainable lifestyle choices

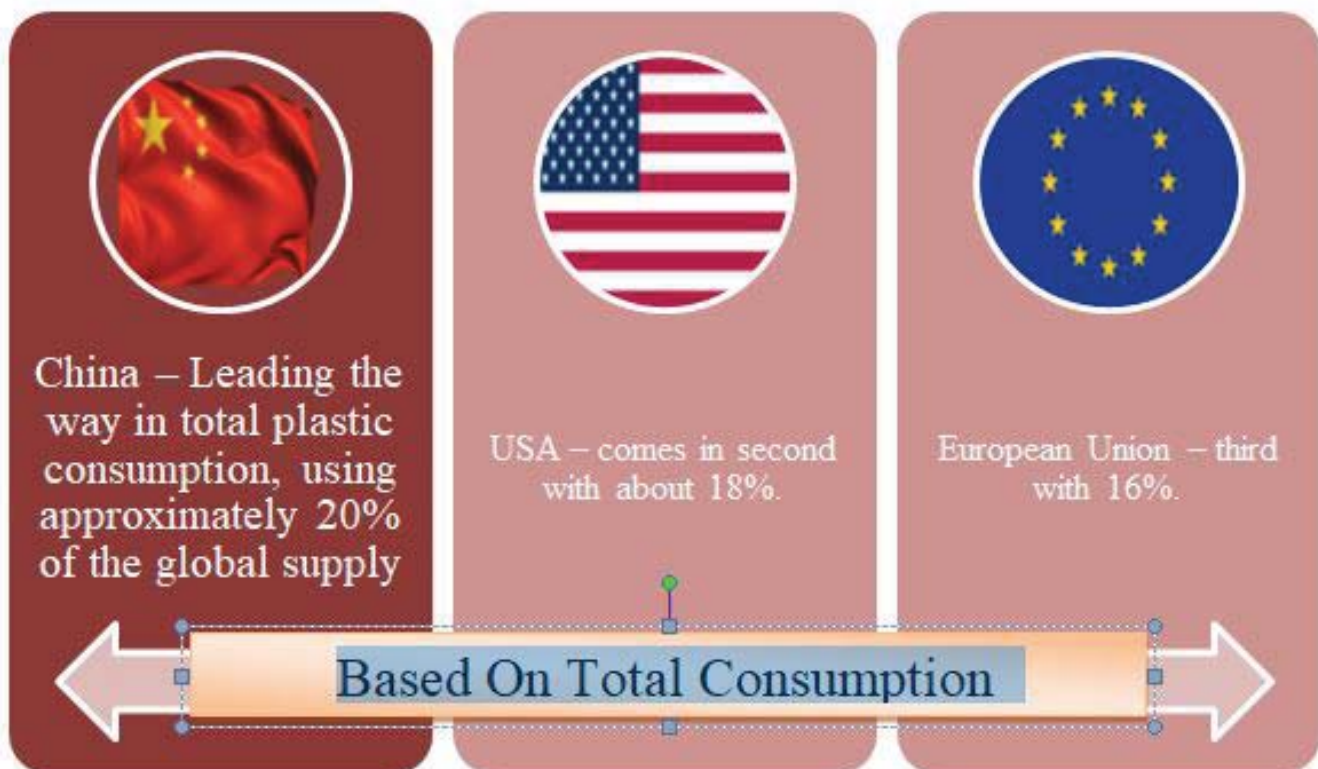
The company Bainyan nation works to reduce plastic recycling and also organizes waste collection networks. APP:- Earth5R (It engages community members)

#### FESTIVAL IS A BASIC CAUSES: PLASTIC USE

- Zero waste Tribal Festival of Himachal Pradesh is organized.
- Solung festival is organized by tribal in Arunachal Pradesh.

iii. Echoes of the Earth are held as a festival in Bengaluru.

Sikkim, not just a city but a state in India, was the first state to ban plastic bags in 1998 and is still plastic-free, followed by Himachal Pradesh. China and the United States is the largest plastic consumer by 2025<sup>11</sup>. India is also a major source of plastic pollution, as waste management is not effective in India. China is the largest consumer of plastic, consuming 20% of the total global supply, while the America is second with 18%. India is the world's largest plastic polluter and one of the largest producers of plastic waste, although it is not among the top countries in per capita plastic use. Countries like Nigeria and Indonesia are also at second and third place after India, which are damaging the environment due to their huge waste<sup>12</sup>. UK show an estimated 23,500 tonnes of waste are produced by music festivals each year – about the same weight as 78 fully loaded Boeing 747 airplanes. Research shows that major festivals in the US, such as Coachella, Stagecoach and Desert Trip, generate around 100 tonnes of solid waste each festival day.





According to the data on per capita consumption (2022) :-

i. United States of America (USA) – Per capita plastic consumption was 216 kg.

ii. Japan – comes in second with 129kg.

iii. European Union – per capita consumption figure is 87kg.

Per capita plastic consumption in India is 11 kg per year. India generates around 26,000 tonnes of plastic waste every day, a large portion of which is left untreated or ends up in landfills. Plastic is most commonly used in areas like packaging and clothing exports. About 412 lakh tonnes of plastic waste is generated every year in India. Only 8% of waste was recycled in 2019. In 2023, it was recycling about 9.9 million tonnes. In 2024, the production was approximately 15.5 lakh tonnes, of which only 13% was recycled. Every year in India, about 126513 lakh tonnes of plastic waste reaches the sea through 1169 rivers; these include rivers like Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra. India has also been described as the world's biggest plastic polluter<sup>13</sup>.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi started Swachh Bharat Diwas on 2 October in 2014 to fulfill Gandhiji's dream. Under the plastic waste Management Rules 2021 to control and restrict the use of plastic in India. The export, import, storage, distribution, sale and use of single-use plastic (SUP) items has been banned in India from July 1<sup>st</sup> 2022. Plastic waste management in India is a significant political issue addressed by the government through various regulations and policies, including the plastic waste Management rules 2016 and its amendments. Avoid using plastic and maintain it :-

- Reducing the use of plastic and using crusher machines to crush bottles.
- One should always use a dustbin for garbage. For this, colored dustbins should be used so that the garbage can be disposed of easily.
- Glass or metal containers should be used.
- Use glass or copper vessels instead of plastic bottles to store water or milk in the refrigerator.
- Stop chewing gum, it is made of synthetic rubber i.e. plastic, due to which small pieces of plastic get mixed in our blood and cause serious diseases.
- Even today, in cities like Tamil Nadu, artificial plastic items are used in very small quantities for decoration.
- In Bihar, Jharkhand, UP and other states, plastic made bhojpatra is used for bhojpatra, whereas in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, banana leaves are used as bhojpatra. Which can be executed very easily?

## CONCLUSION

It is sum up that the plastic free environment is very burning topic and significant for individuals life as well a social life. Our Indian constitution promised the clean environment is a fundamental right of every one. Government policies also focused on the prevention of plastic on ground level and three R concepts is wonderful ideology for reform and prevention of plastic.

## REFERENCES

1. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, available at: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2134392/> (last visited 08.10.2025)
2. Plastic-Free India Initiatives: How India is Winning the War Against Plastic Pollution, available at: <https://netzeroindia.org/plastic-free-india-initiatives/> (last visited 08.10.2025)
3. M. Mahajan Singh, R.P. Singh, P. K. Gupta, S. Singh & M. Pratap, Preventing Microplastic Pollution in Surface Waters: Legal Frameworks and Strategic Actions. Environmental Quality Management, 35(1), (2025). <https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.70116>
4. R.S. Robin et al., "Removal of marine litter and its impact along the coast of India" Records of the Zoological Survey of India 67–86 (2023).
5. Katie Conlon, "Emerging Transformations in Material Use and Waste Practices in the Global South: Plastic-Free and Zero Waste in India," 7 Urban science 47 (2023).
6. Kanwal D. P. Singh and Aakriti Mathur, "Plastic Pollution in India: An Evaluation of Public Awareness and Consumption Behaviour" Social Science Research Network (2019).
7. "The Social Rendition of Plastic Waste Management Initiatives in India," 31–58 (Emerald Publishing Limited eBooks, 2023).
8. Ibid.
9. Shri Kalyan Women Welfare Society, available at: <https://www.skwws.in/2022/07/projects.html> (last visited on 08.10.2025)
10. Recycle India Foundation, available at: <https://recycleindiafoundation.com/> (last visited on 08.10.2025)
11. UN Environment Program, available at: <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/how-indian-state-sikkim-working-end-plastic-pollution> (last visited on 08.10.2025)
12. World Economic Forum, available at: <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2019/08/3-ways-music-festivals-are-tackling-plastic-waste/> (last visited on 08.10.2025)
13. India contributed just 3.5% of global plastic waste in 2022: Analysis, the Economics Times, 10 April, 2025.