



Half done

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A plan is needed for plastic waste in packaging and manufacturing

- India won global acclaim for its “Beat Plastic Pollution” resolve declared on World Environment Day last year, under which it pledged to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.
- So far, 22 States and Union Territories have joined the fight, announcing a ban on single-use plastics such as carry bags, cups, plates, cutlery, straws and thermocol products.
- Voluntary initiatives are having an impact in many States, as citizens reduce, reuse and sort their waste.
- Yet, this is only a small start.
- Waste plastic from packaging of everything from food, cosmetics and groceries to goods delivered by online platforms remains unaddressed.
- It will take a paradigm shift in the manner in which waste is collected and handled by municipal authorities to change this.
- Governments must start charging the producers for their waste, and collect it diligently, which will lead to recovery and recycling.
- But the depressing reality is that State and local governments are unwilling to upgrade their waste management systems, which is necessary to even measure the true scale of packaging waste.
- The Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 are clear that producers, importers and brand owners must adopt a collect-back system for the plastic they introduce into the environment.
- But it is the fast moving consumer goods sector that uses large volumes of packaging, posing a higher order challenge which calls for urgent action.
- Governments should show the same resolve here, as they have done in imposing the ban.

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