



# Plastics in Our Lives

Imagine Life Without Plastics!

Use Wisely, Dispose of Correctly!

Indian Centre for Plastics in Environment

[www.icpenviro.org](http://www.icpenviro.org)

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## PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT NEEDS PRAGMATIC APPROACH



The apprehension about plastic as an environment problem in today's society has brought about tremendous pressure on Plastic manufacturers, processors and users. Plastics and Environment issues were the subject of a seminar organised by the Indian Centre for Plastics in the Environment (ICPE) and the Central Institute of Plastic Engineering Technology (CIPET) in Chennai on July 27.

"We are engulfed with plastic products and materials, which have become the most attractive options for numerous applications in every facet of human life. The application of Plastics has facilitated in the preservation of natural resources like wood, metal and water conservation of energy and safeguarding of hygiene", said **Dr. Sushil Kumar Verma**, Director General of CIPET in his keynote address.

The global consumption of all types of polymers - commodity, engineering, high performance blends, alloys - which were around 70 million tons in 1990 has increased to around 145 million tons in 2001, Dr Verma pointed out.

Referring to the Environmental concerns due to uncontrolled littering of carry bags, flexible pouches, food wrappers and packaging materials based on polyolefins, disposable polystyrene cups, plates, PET bottles etc., Dr Verma called for evolving a proper system of plastic waste collection at source and their reuse by recycling and disposal by



incineration with the active participation of plastic industry associations and raw material manufacturers, traders and dealers.

**Dr Indrani Chandrasekaran**, Director, Union Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) drew attention to a number of Central regulations and legislations for plastic waste management.

"Recycled Plastic (Management & Handling) Rules, 1999 had provisions for stringent measures to control the indiscriminate use of recycled plastics", she said. The MoEF has initiated further amendment to the recycled plastic rules on the recommendations of the Justice Ranganath Misra Committee report, 2002, Dr Indrani said. Further, buy-back of plastic containers and plastic packaging, setting up of collection centers for plastic waste for recycling by Industry are the other recommendations taken up for implementation, she added.

**Mr. A.K Jain**, former Additional Commissioner of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) shared his experience of initiating solid waste management, including plastic waste, jointly with ICPE and

NGOs in Mumbai. He also referred to the Advanced Locality Management (ALM) groups of citizens in aiding segregation of plastic waste and recycling. The government alone, he said, would not be able to meet the enormous task of disposing of 7000 tons of civic waste in Mumbai everyday.

Dr. A.K. Banerjee, Managing Director of Inventa Technologies, and Mr. S Subramaniam, Director, Protec Consultants, highlighted the advancement of recycling technology. They pointed out the endless possibilities of using recycled plastics in construction industry, in road laying and in manufacturing everyday-use products that makes people's life easier and safe. "Your waste is our resources," quipped Mr. Subramaniam.



On the allegation that plastics released dreaded Dioxin in the process of manufacture and incineration, **Dr A.N Bhatt**, Director General of ICPE asserted that, "Commonly used plastics materials made of polyolefins-carry bags, buckets, mugs, disposable cups, packaging containers for edible oil and milk do not release Dioxin at all, when burnt". Dr. Verma further stated that, "the insignificant amount of Dioxin found in the production of PVC are comparable to that found in grass or soil."



Professor T. Swaminathan, IIT, Chennai called for a pragmatic approach. "Is the ban on plastics a practicable solution? Can anyone clearly define 'disposable' and 'non-disposable' plastics?" "The most favourable characteristics of plastics - stability, resistance to biological attack and versatility, the very causes of their wide and rapid spread - are responsible for their problems in the Environment", he pointed out. "If the experience of ban on DDT or Cigarette smoking is any indicator, then one can easily imagine the outcome of ban on plastics," Prof Swaminathan cautioned.

Earlier, Dr. T. Ramaswamy, Director, Central Leather Research institute, Chennai, inaugurating the seminar emphasised the need for balanced dialogue on plastics and the environment and stated that one should take all safeguards in the use of plastics and its after use.

## BIODEGRADABLE FOOD TRAYS

In the UK, a new range of biodegradable and waterproof thermoplastic food trays have been launched. The trays, which are a composite of starch and polyesters, could help towards reducing the two million tons of plastic waste currently produced in the UK.

The material is as strong as PVC and polypropylene so it retains its properties during use but completely breaks down after about six weeks on a compost heap. As well as being used for trays, the composite can be used for covers and netting.

"We see the use of biodegradable materials in our products as a huge leap towards, meeting the government's target to reduce plastic waste by 20 per cent within the next four years," said Sharp Interpack's sales and marketing director Jeremy Sampson - the manufacturers of this product. "We hope that, in time, this new technology will supercede the need for conventional plastic packaging and provide a cost effective, environmentally friendly solution that maintains integrity and shelf life."

- **Food Production Daily.com**

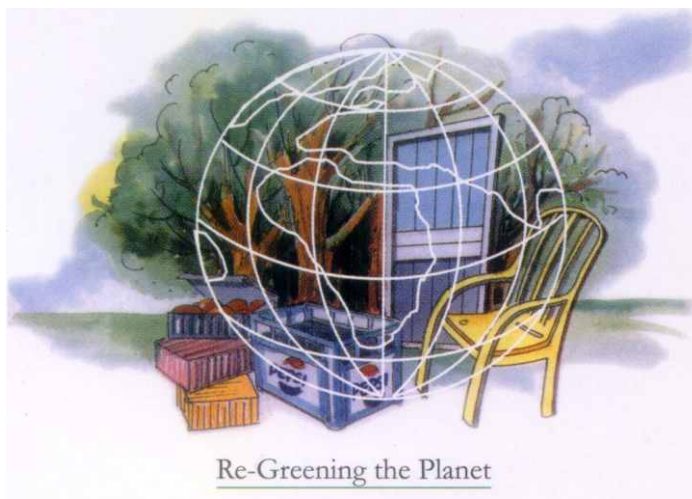
## Virtues of Plastics over weigh its misuse

Facts like chemical inertness of many commodity plastics materials, application of plastics in bio-medical field like artificial heart valve compatible to human body, plastics parts used for human implantation, artificial limbs, etc., are not to be forgotten while raising the issue of the so called adverse impact of plastics on environment.

The use of plastics in packaging applications saves transportation cost and energy. In India packaging sector accounts for around 30 per cent of total plastics consumption. And packaging without plastics would result in increase of 300 % by weight, 150% by volume, and 100 % in energy consumption. In the construction and furniture industry, the use of plastics in place of wood in numerous applications helps in protecting the natural forest wealth of the country.

The need of the hour is to educate people about the usefulness of plastics and create awareness about proper disposal, and stop free litter of plastics after use.

-**V.Ramakrishnan, Chairman, PLEXCONCIL**



### ICPE in Brief

The Indian Centre for Plastics in the Environment (ICPE), set up in 1999, is a nodal agency recognized by the Government of India to handle all issues related to plastics and environment in the country. It works to create awareness on the importance of acting responsibly in the disposal of plastics because life without plastics is unimaginable. ICPE works closely with Central and State and local governments to ensure the responsible and safe disposal in matters of legislation, creating the infrastructure and facilitating ways and means of protecting the environment.

It also develops and encourages standards/specifications/ guidelines for recycling of plastic waste and for applications in various products.

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