



E- Retailers to Collect Plastic Waste

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Why in news

The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** has told the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** that e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart need to fulfil their **extended producer responsibility** under the **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016**.

According to the **Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016** “Primary responsibility for collection of used multi-layered plastic sachet or pouches or packaging **is of producers, importers and brand owners who introduce the products in the market**”.

They need to establish a system for collecting back the plastic waste generated due to the packaging of their products.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

- EPR is a policy approach under which producers are given a significant responsibility – **financial and/or physical** – for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products.
- Assigning such responsibility could in principle provide incentives to prevent wastes at the source, promote product design for the environment and support the achievement of public recycling and materials management goals.

Plastic Waste Management Rules

- These rules were framed in 2016 which extended the **responsibility to collect waste generated from the products** to their **producers** (i.e persons engaged in the manufacture, or import of carrying bags, multi-layered packaging and sheets or like and the persons using these for packaging or wrapping their products) and **brand owners**.

They have to approach local bodies for the formulation of plan/system for the plastic waste management within the prescribed time frame.

- The rules have been extended to villages as well. Earlier, it was limited to municipal districts.
- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has been mandated to formulate the guidelines for **thermoset plastic** (plastic difficult to recycle).
 - Earlier, there was no specific provision for such type of plastic.
 - Manufacturing and use of non-recyclable multi-layered plastic are to be phased in two years, i.e. by 2018.
- The 2016 rules were amended in 2018, laying emphasis on the phasing out of **Multilayered Plastic (MLP)**, which are "**non-recyclable, or non-energy recoverable, or with no alternate use.**"
 - The amended Rules also prescribe a **central registration system** for the registration of the producer/importer/brand owner.
 - The amendment provided that registration should be automated and take into account ease of doing business for producers, recyclers and manufacturers.
 - While a **national registry** has been prescribed for producers with a presence in more than two states, a **state-level registration** has been prescribed for smaller producers/brand owners operating within one or two states.

Central Pollution Control Board

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) of India is a **statutory organisation** under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- It was established in 1974 under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.**
- The CPCB is also entrusted with the powers and functions under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**

Way Forward

Plastic packaging constitutes more than 40% of the total plastic waste generated in India and it is important that a direction is issued to the e-retailers that they should stop using plastic packaging materials and shift to environment-friendly packaging materials and shift to environment-friendly packaging option.

Source: TH