



Managing plastic waste – What emerging economies like India can learn from developed nations

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The concept of waste management has accelerated in the past few years with manufacturers, corporates and the government looking to introduce sustainable and eco-friendly practices. While some of these practices are in full swing, developing nations still have a long way to go when it comes to waste management for plastics in particular. The matter with many developing countries is that despite strengthening their stance against plastic waste they fail to effectively implement it due to the dearth of infrastructure, enforcement and availability of affordable alternatives. Besides this, the ecosystem suffers from ambiguity in policies and absence of penalties on citizens and commercial enterprises, which makes effective implementation of waste management even tougher to see a real, long-lasting change.

Plastic waste has gathered a lot of attention in recent times due to its accelerating numbers in the global economy, its low material recovery rates and the environmental impact associated with current methods of disposing. According to the recent United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) report, the world produces 400 million ton single-use plastic (SUP) waste annually (47 per cent of the total plastic waste) and it was also estimated that only 9% of this plastic waste is getting recycled worldwide. The numbers are daunting and the efforts undertaken today by various economies definitely seem to lag way behind the desired numbers.

Like any other country, waste management is a pressing issue in India, especially with the perpetual growth of consumerism throughout the nation. According to the Central Pollution Control Board in India, 60 major India cities produce combined 25,940 tons of plastic waste every day. Interestingly, almost 60% of the total plastic waste generated in India gets recycled while the remaining simply seeps into the environment. How-

ever, most of this plastic makes its way into ocean beds and landfills. Plastic waste has been one of the foremost concerns of the developing world including India. It does not take much to recognize how much we as individuals, across the world are reliant on the functions of plastic and the callous disposal we do after each use.

Nations across the globe have implemented unique practices driven by innovative thinking which developing countries like India can look up to take inspiration from.

Plastic Waste Tax

Plastic Waste Tax introduced by European Union and brought into force from January 1, 2021 is composed of a share of revenues from national contributions calculated on the weight of non-recycled plastic packaging waste with an effective rate of €0.80 per kilogram. The levy will be paid annually by each Member State. States will likely, not mandatory though, use this opportunity to create equivalent plastic imposes at national markets to recoup the costs of their contributions to the EU budget. Many States have already initiated different national tax projects according to the nations' local situation eg Spain (non-reusable plastic packaging), Finland (packaging made from non-renewable natural resources), Lithuania (composite plastic), Slovenia (composites and plastic coated paper), Italy (single-use plastics except compostable or recycled plastic). This levy will create a new burden for manufacturers placing packaged goods in the market, because it will be based on the weight of plastic placed in the market or waste generated, and not on the plastic waste recycled.

Plastic Packaging Tax

The United Kingdom, for example announced a new tax in the 2018 budget on produced or imported plastic packaging. The

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