



## Awareness programme on ban plastic

**Sambalpur:** Polythene and plastic users across the city beware!

It can be mentioned here that the State Government had decided to restrict the indiscriminate use of certain types of plastic products in the territorial jurisdiction of five municipal corporations and in famous place of pilgrimage and tourist destination with effect from the 2nd October, last year.

According to the state government directive, no person will be allowed to sell, manufacture, and import and stock plastic and polythene items. There will be a complete ban on carrying any items in plastic and polythene bags. Using plastic and polythene covers in transportation will also be banned. The state imposed a ban on the sale, use and manufacture of plastic bags with less than 50 micron thickness. Plastic and polythene bag stocked by the trading establishments will be seized and manufacturing unit sealed. If the traders and manufacturing company are found selling these items they would be slapped a fine depending on the volume.

"Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) is strictly implementing the ban on plastic and enforcing the 'plastic waste management tools' following government of India guidelines," The municipal corporation here has started efforts to check the use of polythene and other plastic materials in the town by strictly enforcing the law. SMC had prohibited use of polythene products more than three years ago and succeeded in enforcing the ban. The civic officials conduct regular raids and penalise shops which are found using polythene bags. They regularly conduct raids on roadside vendors, shops, markets and shopping malls and impose fine on the violators.

Fish and meat markets, fruit markets and eateries will be under close watch. Seizure of banned items, imposition of fines, issuing of show-cause notices and other such activities shall be taken up by the squads under the enforcement order. Sources said, within a short period so far SMC enforcement squads have collected a fine and seized polythene/plastics from various markets, small business establishments and malls. The corporation has seized about 24 quintals of banned polythene products from various business establishments across the city between April and September this year. The corporation has also collected fine of `2.43 lakh from the violators during the period. Similarly, 64 quintals of banned polythene products have been seized between 2015-16 and 2017-18, while fine of `14.94 lakh collected from the violators. This would discourage businessmen to use plastic.

The enforcement department of the municipal corporation has collected Rs 54,900 in April and May this year by imposing fines on small shop-owners and business houses for using polythene, With the strict imposition of the rules and frequent checks carried out in various areas, the use of plastic and specially polythene have drastically reduced, during 2017-18, the corporation had collected Rs 4.5 lakh from the business houses for using the banned items. Apart from this, the corporation collected a fine of Rs 94,800 and Rs 60,000 from the residents and some of the business establishments for dumping garbage on the streets or in drains in April and May respectively.

Before enforcing the ban, The Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) had launched several awareness drives, camps training to educate student's traders, public on the polythene ban and made the people aware about its impact on environment. The awareness drive conducted in the various places, office in phase's .Its objective will be to ensure that "The traders are still not aware of why the raids are being conducted and which type of polythene can be used and which can't. The administration had also held meetings with owners of the shops, business establishments, eateries and asked them to refrain from using the polythene bags and opt for carry bags made of biodegradable materials.

According to the guideline of the Central pollution Control Board, the manufacturer, sale and use of polythene bags of thickness below 50 micron is not allowed very few traders understood the guideline and almost non stocked carry –bags of thickness of 50 micron or more."The awareness camp will make our work easy and the traders won't have to pay penalty," The polythene is hazardous to the environment.

"SMC impart awareness among schools by organised the event in Kandriya Vidyalaya in Burla essay competition in the topic: SAY NO TO PLASTIC, show the slide PPT presentation among the students and staffs to ban plastic and distributed the prizes to the students. There, our experts explained and demonstrate which are banned and which are non banned plastics in order to eliminate confusion,"

The reason behind the ban on polythene and plastics below the prescribed limits (50 micron) is due to the fact that the plastics are non-biodegradable and cause threat to the ecological system. They reduce the fertility of soil and hamper growth of plants, choke drains and sewer resulting in overflowing gutters and if swallowed by cattle, may cause death by obstructing their intestine.

Secondly, the colour pigments used in polythene/plastics contaminate food products wrapped in them and cause health hazards and some are even carcinogenic. While plastic products take hundreds of years for degradation, as they are not biodegradable like paper bags, they also block the rainwater infiltrating into the soil hindering recharge of ground water.

Most importantly the plastic bags when discarded can get filled with rainwater offering ideal breeding ground for vector borne diseases like malaria and burning of plastics also releases most carcinogenic and toxic substances like dioxins, furans and hydrogen cyanide, which pollute air as well as cause severe and chronic health problems.

Among the banned plastic and polythene are drinking water pouches, plastic water bottles with less than 500ml capacity, polythene bags, disposable plastic cups, plates, glasses, bowls, spoons, thermocol cups, plates, glasses and bowls, plastic dishes used in hotels for packing food items and plastic straws used for cold drinks and beverages.

Thermocol will not be used for decorating marriage pendals and puja mandaps. People have been asked not to carry any plastic or polythene bags to any public place. All religious institutions, hotels and restaurants have been directed to strictly abide by the order.

However, blood transfusion bags, plastic used in plant nurseries, agriculture, horticulture, healthcare, medicines, plastic and polythene having more than 50 microns, plastic bags having 20% reusability, water bottles having more than 500 ml capacity and thermocol used for transportation of electronic goods have been exempted from the purview of the ban order.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change have made the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 restricting the use of certain plastic carry bags and containers and its management.

Cinema hall owners have been asked to spread awareness through slideshows free of cost for one year. Besides, the media has been requested to launch an intensive awareness campaign against the use of plastic and polythene.

The use of polythene and plastic bags had come down to about 50 % during the awareness campaign, an alternative measure, cotton and paper bags can be used. Sources said that A large number of people, especially women, have taken up paper bag making as a source of income. The price of old newspapers, which sold at Rs 5 a kg, now, sells for Rs 12 a kg.















By: MRT, AMRUT, SMC