



NITI Aayog



NITI Aayog – UNDP Launch Handbook on Sustainable Management of Plastic Waste for ULB's

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NITI Aayog and UNDP India launched a handbook to promote sustainable management of plastic waste in the country.

The report, titled 'NITI Aayog-UNDP Handbook on Sustainable Urban Plastic Waste Management', was released on 11th October, 2021 by NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Dr Rajiv Kumar, CEO Shri Amitabh Kant, Shri. Rameshwar Prasad Gupta, Secretary Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Special Secretary Dr K. RajeswaraRao, and Ms. Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India.

The report has been jointly developed by UNDP India and NITI Aayog, in consultation with eminent experts and leading organizations in the domain of plastic waste. The discussion for the Handbook was initiated in February 2021. This was followed by over 20 virtual stakeholder consultations, including Urban Local Bodies, Recyclers, Corporates, Civil Society Organizations, Academia, managed by UNDP. The format included expert interviews, focussed group discussions, and technical workshops covering 14 Indian cities and 4 South East Asian cities. The Handbook presents best practices and examples from cities in India and Southeast Asia which face similar infrastructure and plastic waste challenges.

Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog emphasized, "Generating mass awareness is the key for achieving sustainable plastic waste management in the cities. He further added "The Indore model of spreading mass awareness and explaining importance of waste management at household level needs to be adopted by other cities. It will be the key to make plastic waste management a people's movement." He further added that innovations which will eliminate the drudgery of rag picking and provide a better quality life for these workers should be encouraged. This will make waste recycling more efficient."

Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog emphasized, "The Urban Local Bodies across the country face tremendous pressure to provide efficient waste management services in the midst of an unprecedented scale of urbanisation that India is witnessing. The country has leapfrogged in sanitation sector, and similarly we need to create a massive Jan Andolan around plastic waste management to achieve complete recycling of our waste."

He further added that "The handbook covers crucial components for sustainable urban plastic waste management including, technical models, recovery facilities, IEC and digitisation, and good governance."



 Dr Rajeswara Rao, Special Secretary, NITI Aayog, said “NITI Aayog has constituted 11 committees for bringing circular economy in various areas of waste management. With complete recycling of plastic waste followed by extraction of valuables and mixing it with virgin materials, the transition to a circular economy in plastic waste sector will be completed.” He further added, “Social inclusion of  informal workers is crucial for sustainable plastic waste management. Promoting entrepreneurial opportunities and development of waste pickers cooperatives are important initiatives for  formalisation of informal workers in the waste management sector.”

 Shri R.P Gupta, Secretary, MoEFCC highlighted “Only about 9% of the total plastic produced globally gets recycled, about 12% is incinerated and energy is recovered, and rest about 79% gets into land, water, and ocean and pollutes the environment.” He further added “Phasing out single use  plastic is crucial and to the extent possible, plastic items for which alternatives are available needs to be abandoned. The handbook on Sustainable Urban Plastic Waste Management will play a major role in fulfilling the goal of reducing the use of plastic and increasing plastic waste recycling, and also ensuring that plastic waste is brought to minimal”

“The Plastic Waste Management programme at UNDP promotes the collection, segregation and recycling of all types of plastic waste to protect our environment and create a circular economy for plastics. The programme also ensures the wellbeing and financial inclusion of waste pickers, one of the most critical stakeholders in the waste value chain,” shared Ms. Shoko Noda, Resident Representative, UNDP India.

She added, “The programme is aligned with the principles of Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0. We are happy to share our learnings in this Handbook and provide urban local bodies with replicable models. UNDP is committed and proud to partner with the Government of India, NITI Aayog, state governments and other development partners for this great initiative to ensure sustainable plastic waste management.

”Sustainable Urban Plastic Waste Management: Summary

Urban local bodies (ULBs) are mandated under the Municipal Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, and the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016, to manage municipal solid waste and plastic waste at the city level. The handbook is a repository of 18 case studies/best practices from India, including 4 from south Asian countries divided into four major components, including a) Technical models for recycling, b) Material Recovery Facilities (MRF), c) Governance for effective plastic waste management, and d) IEC and Digitization. The book covers every aspect of the entire plastic waste management service chain and will enable Urban Local Bodies and other stakeholders involved in the sector to learn from the successful business and service models covered under this handbook to plan for efficient plastic waste management in their cities according to their requirements and guidelines.

Component I: Technical model for plastic waste recycling and management

This component based on an integrated and inclusive approach by involving different stakeholders and their social benefits, covers, a) Development of a baseline system of plastic waste management at the city level , b) Systems approach for promoting recycling of plastic waste at the city level, c) Stakeholder identification and partnerships, d) Development of regulatory need-gap analysis and proposals for the holistic management of plastic waste

Component II: Material Recovery Facility – For improved plastic waste management implementation



 This component explains the complete functioning of a material recovery facility (MRF), beginning from site identification, construction and waste processing mechanisms at the MRF.

Component III: Institutionalization of MRFs in governance bodies

 The mainstreaming of waste pickers in the plastic waste management system would result in improved socio-economic conditions for waste pickers and increased recognition in society. This requires the institutionalization of various recommended models and waste pickers by ULBs for long-term sustainability. Some of the major activities are linking services of the waste pickers with MRFs, capacity building, making them financially literate and opening bank accounts for them,  linking them to various social protection schemes, providing occupational ID cards, health benefits and personal protective equipment while working, providing facilities like creches or play areas and  other basic child education facilities, and creating self-help groups.

Component IV: IEC and Digitalization

This component includes the development of knowledge management mechanisms by establishing an in-built adoptive feedback system from different stages of plastic waste value chain. It also involves the identification of various technology platforms, or technical service providers, linkages with relevant stakeholders such as bulk waste generators (BWGs), recyclers and waste pickers, and the development of protocols for more effective online reporting, monitoring and information exchange.

Various models including, development of entrepreneurial opportunities for waste pickers, development of waste pickers cooperatives to build their own non-profit organization, development of a blended workforce combining waste pickers and non-waste pickers etc. are covered under the handbook. The models detailed in this Handbook aim to bring sustainable plastic waste management into practice. The various systems approach detailed out in the report are aligned with the Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 and the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 and 2018. These models ensure compliance with regulations and improve resource utilization. The models not only focus on managing plastic waste but also on social inclusion and protection for waste pickers by improving their socio-economic conditions. To implement these models, the role of different stakeholders such as ULBs, recyclers, service providers, brand owners and waste pickers are detailed in this Handbook.

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