



What ban?

Twenty-five Indian States and Union Territories now have some form of ban on polythene carry bags, but the implementation is often a challenge and such bags continue to be used. In Karnataka and Punjab, a ban has been in place since 2016. However, the widespread availability of and demand for polythene bags persists in these States.

Wider scope

Neighbouring Puducherry, which has a ban on plastic items that are less than 50 microns thick, now plans to ban single-use plastic items altogether. The Puducherry Pollution Control Committee, an autonomous body, has recommended a ban on plastic carry bags, plates, disposable cups, sheets, straws, expanded thermocol and water pouches.

Leading the way

Major temples in Tamil Nadu are already implementing a ban on single-use plastics. Carry bags are not allowed and devotees are asked to carry puja items in baskets. As for prasadam, including sakara pongal, venn pongal and curd rice, many temples have aluminium foil containers.

For details on the ban, please go to <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/towards-a-plastics-free-tamil-nadu/article25650261.ece>

Rewards & levies: the Tiruchi way

Prize schemes for segregating waste help usher in behavioural change

C. JAISANKAR
TIRUCHI

The carrot-and-stick approach adopted by the Tiruchi Corporation has made a big difference in bringing about a behavioural change among residents of the city towards segregating waste at source, thereby enabling the civic body to market recyclable plastics to traders and merchants once a week.

While it rewards residents who segregate and hand over degradable and non-degradable waste, the civic body also levies spot fines on violators.

The Corporation has made segregation of solid waste at source mandatory since June 5, 2017 and introduced a prize scheme with gold coins for residents who adhere to the new system. Residents were asked to send pictures of themselves handing over segregated waste to a specified WhatsApp number every Wednesday. The winner was selected through a draw of lots and given a gold coin.

As expected, the scheme motivated many residents to take part, thereby gradually increasing the volume of plastic waste collected.

After running the scheme for a year, the Corporation introduced another scheme, this time offering electric kettles. Under the scheme, which is still running, four



Smart initiative: Officials unveiling a bicycle to be offered as a prize to school students as part of an awareness programme on source segregation of solid waste. *FILE PHOTO

residents are given a prize every week.

Roping in students

The Corporation also reached out to students with a 'Students @ Clean City' campaign to reward school-children who persuade their parents to segregate household waste before handing it over to civic sanitary workers or do it themselves, with bicycles and other gifts.

While the biodegradable waste is converted into organic manure, the plastic waste, after being compressed into bundles, is sold to traders and merchants for recycling. Inert waste is sent to cement factories in Arsyalur for use as fuel in kilns.

Corporation officials make it a point to clear non-degradable waste a week. In order to keep its workers motivated, the civic body shares the revenue generated through the sale of recyclable waste.

Impressive record

Ever since the prize scheme was introduced in June 2017, the Corporation has collected 13,975 metric tonnes of non-degradable waste from households and commercial establishments. It has generated revenue to the tune of ₹2.60 crore and the sum has been disbursed to sanitary workers.

"Awareness on waste segregation has increased man-

ifold since the introduction of the prize scheme. It works exceedingly well. If residents segregate the waste at home, it will ease the work of sanitary workers. They also work meticulously as they get weekly incentives for collecting non-degradable waste," said N. Ravichandran, Corporation Commissioner.

He said that the civic body had levied penalties to the tune of ₹5 lakh on about 2,000 violators. "We give equal importance to rewarding law-abiding citizens and penalising violators. We have managed to bring about a behavioural change on waste segregation among 40% to 50% of residents. We are on the right track," he added.

Set up panel of experts: industry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu Plastics Manufacturers' Association (TAPMA) on Monday sought the appointment of an expert committee to study the consequences and loss that the proposed ban on one-time use plastics will cause.

Addressing a press meet, B. Swaminathan, TAPMA's chairman-environment committee, said that while the government was organising the Global Investors Meet, it was killing already running industries with the ban. Similarly, even as the government talked about employment creation, it was also rendering over 2 lakh people jobless.

The industry plans to hold a silent protest in the city on December 13, seeking withdrawal of the ban. By banning production of single-use plastics, the government was taking away their right to sell such products in other States, he added.

Virendra Kumar Bhayani, President, TAPMA, said that the Government Order issued in this regard was discriminatory in nature.