

Foundation for Campaign Against Plastic Pollution

Dated Greater Noida the 14th August, 2021

Press Note

Webinar on Role of NGOs in Curbing Plastic Pollution

A webinar on Role of NGOs in Curbing Plastic Pollution was organised by the Foundation for Campaign Against Plastic Pollution (CAPP) on 14th August (Saturday) 2021 from 4.30 pm to 6.00 pm on a digital platform. CAPP is an NGO, whose mission is to significantly reduce plastic pollution in environment through creation of awareness about the harms of plastic pollution and to educate people at large about the safe disposal of plastic waste. The members of the CAPP come from a wide spectrum of fields. Its aim is to convert its mission into a people's movement through which the mindsets of the people is changed to bring about behavioural change towards plastic use and its safe disposal. This was the sixth webinar in the series of webinars that CAPP has decided to organise, with a view to create awareness about various issues related to plastic pollution and to evolve practical solutions to substantially mitigate the problem of plastic pollution.

The webinar was well attended. Mr. Anoop Kumar Srivastava, Founder Director welcomed the participants and elaborated the problems created by plastic pollution and the damage it is causing to the environment, wildlife, marine life and human health. He added that Plastic pollution has to be tackled on many fronts. It requires an integrated approach involving multiple stakeholders like the Central Government, State Governments, Central Pollution Control Board, State Pollution Control Boards, Municipal bodies and gram panchayats, Private Sector (specially the single-use plastics manufacturers), Educational and Research Institutions, NGOs, Press & the media, and the citizens. He explained that the objective of this webinar was to spell out the role that NGOs can play more effectively in curbing the plastic pollution.

There were three main speakers – Mr. Erik Solheim, former Executive Director of UN Environment & Senior Advisor at World Resource Institute, Ms. Divya Sinha head of the Urban Pollution Control Division in the Central Pollution Control Board, and Mr. Ashish Jain, Founder Director of Indian Pollution Control Association.

Mr. Erik Solheim emphasized that the problem of plastic pollution is not a small problem, but it is an economic, environmental and health issue of first rate. This huge global problem has to be tackled by all stakeholders comprehensively. The civil society can play a huge role in this regard. He broadly identified four areas of intervention by the NGOs in mitigation of plastic pollution – (1) Creation of awareness through short films, social media, etc. (2) Help political leaders in identifying most problematic single-use plastic items, (3) Work with businesses in developing and promoting eco-friendly replacements of single-use plastics, and (4) Recycling of plastic waste into energy, fuel or some useful products.

Ms. Divya Sinha elaborately outlined the framework of plastic waste management in the country under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 focussing on five components. She also enumerated the various stakeholders under the framework and identified several areas where the NGOs can chip in, for example, liaising between the Government and the private sector, fostering the urban waste management system, engaging with media, identifying major hotspots of plastic pollution and alerting the authorities, participating in IEC activities, engaging with plastic recyclers and providing training to socially marginalised workers, helping the brand owners in fulfilling their extended producers responsibility, eco-designing of products incorporating zero waste concept, etc.

Mr. Ashish Jain stated that not only NGOs, but everyone can help in creation of awareness. The NGOs are essentially meant for the welfare of the society. He identified multiple roles of NGOs such as acting as watchdog and alerting authorities about the violation of rules, engaging in collection of plastic waste, formalising the informal sector comprising ragpickers community, acting as bridge between policy makers & waste generators, educating brand owners about the Plastic Waste Management Rules, developing sustainable supply chain of plastic waste, creating infrastructure and recycling facilities by tapping CSR funds, etc.

Col. Sanjay Srivastava, a life member of CAPP summed up the important points that came up in the webinar. The action of Government of India taken on 12th August 2021 by issuing a ban order on certain single-use plastic items was appreciated by one and all. However, it was emphasised that this alone is not a sufficient step for mitigating plastic pollution. It was felt that behavioural change is equally important and every citizen has to realise the gravity of the problem and become a part of its solution.

The webinar ended with a vote of thanks by Shri Anoop Kumar Srivastava, Founder Director, CAPP.
