

Tackling plastic pollution

In the 21st century where the world is grappling with environmental issues such as climate change, rise of sea levels, rising gap in the ozone layer, another major environmental problem is plastic pollution. With an increase in single-use plastics, about 400 million tons of plastic gets produced annually which after a single time use ends up in rivers, lakes, oceans making them unfit for consumption, causing the dilemma of lack of clean drinking water resources to deepen.

Firstly, incorporating sustainable practices is the first step into achieving a global reduction in plastic usage. Investing and adopting biodegradable and compostable material is an example. Biodegradable materials break down naturally in the environment and does not harm the organisms present in the soil, rather it provides a food source for them to fasten the process of degradation, increasing soil fertility. Small businesses and private enterprises similarly, have the ability to begin the transition from single use plastic to their own plant based material by creating products out of bamboo or cloth as an alternative. Additionally, the government can offer tax incentives or reduced tariffs for those institutions and firms producing or encouraging sustainable material.

Secondly, the 3Rs- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle- play a pivotal role in minimizing plastic waste. Reducing unwanted plastic products such as straws and cutlery when the same can be used as glass or metal. Not only is it a healthier alternative, but it also brings into light the over consumption of these products that the market had advertised in a certain appealing way for us to purchase. Encouraging the reuse of items such as cloth bags or refilling a plastic bottle rather than discarding them can make a significant difference. Furthermore, segregating plastic waste into categories like dry and wet can result in faster and more efficient degradation.

Although India prides itself on being a developing country, its waste management infrastructure remains outdated. Trucks bring piles of non-biodegradable plastic waste and dump it on the outskirts of the city resulting in the creation of a waste hill. The government should invest in plastic recycling plants and should develop technology that converts plastic waste into beneficial resources like fuel, as seen in the United States.

Since plastic pollution is not a domestic issue, international cooperation is necessary to combat it effectively. Country representatives must meet to devise strategies to curb the rapidly spreading plastic pollution, introducing policy and regulation measures to ensure compliance. Until new policies come into effect, all nations must implement temporary provisions to restrict the growth of plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution is a solvable issue through collective effort. It requires individuals, groups, and communities to work together by adopting sustainable practices, implementing stringent policy regulations, and establishing effective waste management systems. Every step counts, no matter how small it may seem. In the long run, even the smallest efforts can contribute to combating this pressing issue.

