

Thematic Area: Sustainable Lifestyles towards enhancing Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy

Day & Date : Saturday, June 2, 2018; 09:00 to 14:30 hrs

Venue : Vigyan Bhavan, Hall No-06, Rajpath Road, Central Secretariat, Delhi

CONCEPT NOTE

Indian economy and society have undergone a dynamic transformation over the last two decades. This has also been accompanied by a change in the lifestyle of the people, especially the middle and upper classes with higher incomes at disposal. Resultantly, the consumption habits and patterns have also changed accompanied by an increase in the range and volumes of products available.

One of the most pervasive materials that has led to greater comfort for people is plastics. Globally, the production of plastics has seen a twenty-fold increase from 1960 levels to 311 million tonnes in 2014. Its versatile nature has led to its widespread application in many critical areas. Due to the country's highly dynamic market environment, processing volumes of plastics are expected to grow by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of above 10%¹.

To address the problem, Government of India has issued the new Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 which mandates implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and integration of informal sector. In addition to legislation, the movement towards sustainable lifestyle would require multiple actions and creative approaches. Firstly, awareness among citizens especially, targeting youth and children as agents of change can make a transformational impact. In waste management, simple practice of source segregation and steps of refusing, reusing, recycling and recovery can result in multi fold benefits; for example, reducing the amount of waste for landfill and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Secondly there is a need for developing solutions whereby non-recyclable plastic can be reutilized as secondary raw material for development of newer products with use of efficient technologies and skilling informal sector. The non-recyclable combustible fractions can also be converted to refuse-derived-fuel (RDF) and can be used as alternative fuel in cement plants.

The discussion on global consumption and sustainable lifestyles is not simple and creates a challenge for the policy makers. For policies and messages on sustainable lifestyles to be well understood and efficient, people's perceptions of sustainability, their values and expectations for the future must be taken into account (UNEP 2011). The two plenary sessions proposed on Sustainable Lifestyles will attempt to address the following key questions.

1. How do we define Sustainable Lifestyle as an approach in the context of the current consumption patterns and transition to a circular economy?
2. What kind of policy mixes can be introduced in India to inform consumers towards alternatives?

¹<http://ficci.in/spdocument/20872/report-Plastic-infrastructure-2017-ficci.pdf>

3. How to engage with public at large for enabling behavioural alternatives and transformational pathways?
4. What kinds of voluntary approaches and industry led models can promote sustainability as a decision-making factor for consumer choices?

PROPOSED OUTCOME FROM THE CONFERENCE

Resource efficiency is built around needs, ecological limits, and social acceptability, and is a key element of sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development defined by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have also assigned an important position to resource efficiency. This is directly reflected in Goal 12 on ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns, specifically in terms of substantially reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. Eight other goals (Goals 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15) also directly refer to resource efficiency or sustainable use of resources. Resource efficiency also directly contributes to mitigation of climate change targets, in most cases without necessarily having adverse economic effects.

The International Resource Panel, hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in a recent (May 2016) report notes that more efficient resource use coupled with ambitious action on climate change, could achieve up to a 74% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, whilst also stimulating economic growth. Besides the positive economic, social and environmental advantages, the benefits from resource efficiency could be technical, monetary, aesthetic and cultural.

Resource efficiency thus, because of its strong influence on the attainment of the SDGs and of the nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement, is a top priority for enabling sustainable development now and in the future. The flow of materials and resources along globalized supply chains and product life cycles strengthens the need for a global perspective of resources as well as a need for integrating various policy areas for promoting resource efficiency. Over the years, the Government of India has taken many initiatives in terms of policies and programmes to implement its commitment to the principles and goals of resource efficiency.

However, most of this commitment has resulted in bringing about improvements in energy and waste use efficiency. With the passage of time, new challenges and constraints to meeting the objectives of resource efficiency for metals and minerals have emerged, which also need to be addressed

The two sessions will bring policy options for a resource efficient society, good governance, low ecological footprint and identifying pathways for shifting consumption patterns and lifestyles towards more sustainable alternatives. It will help in identifying key elements essential for developing approaches and policies on sustainable lifestyles considering people's perceptions of sustainability, their values and expectations for the future. The sessions will be opportunity to discuss the consumer

engagement strategies for fostering change in the knowledge and habits related with responsible consumption and sustainable lifestyles. Also, it will enhance awareness of sustainable lifestyles, need for a concerted action and creating an enabling framework for participation of relevant stakeholders.
