



Plastic Pollution: A Menace to Marine Biology

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Opinion

Globalization and Industrialization are two buzz words engulfing the whole world. Starting from developing nations to developed nations, they have become the benchmark of growth. Wooed by developed countries, the prospering nations are in competition in these domains. If the overall growth of industrialization is taken into account, raw materials and packaging are two inevitable parts without which the whole thing would come to a standstill. If we closely, then in packaging, plastic is the major component. Again in some cases, raw materials are also somewhat influenced by plastic. Now going from production to retail outlets, it is needless to say that goods reach consumers again in plastic clad packaging. If the intermediate steps are also reckoned, the whole unpacking and repacking of stuffs in stores go through this plastic only. As a result, we come up a huge load of plastic in the end. Once used they are discarded as waste products, finally to be dumped into ocean. Accordingly, it leads to severe cases of oceanic pollution.

As per estimate, one garbage truck of plastic is dumped into in every minute, taking the toll to 19 billion pounds of plastic trash in every year. As a result, it constitutes 90% of the trash in the ocean, posing as a major threat to the ecosystem. Precisely, more than 45K plastic product can be found per square kilometer. The Mariana Trench is the deepest part of the entire oceanic system. It is the abode of distant, alien forms marine life whose details are not precisely known. But, we, humans have found ways to spoil this untraceable region of the earth. A recent study having analyzed thirty years of data on ocean pollution has found evidence of trash

in this deepest part which is approximately down to a depth of 11km in Mariana Trench. The data corresponds to huge collection of videos and photos taken over this span of years which reveal shocking details of waste products. More than one third of the waste products were affirmed by researchers to be plastic, majority of which are mostly single-use plastic.

More than 1million sea-birds and sea animals die annually due to this endemic pollution. Recent carcasses of large mammals, when cut open, reveal the severity of this plastic pollution. The microplastics damage the marine ecosystem and can easily enter the food chain of marine biology. Many species have already disappeared. Lot of fish species has undergone mass extinction. Due to poor adaptability and aquatic contamination, there is breeding problem for certain species, thus becoming endangered. As per speculation, this may triple in the next ten years.

It is high time to look at this issue very seriously. The days are not far when the ocean water will be abode to plastic than marine biology. There should be strict regulation on single use plastics which forms the major component of ocean pollution. The stakeholders should be brought under stringent conditions to explore ways of recycling of these plastics. Upon violations of certain measures, there must be punitive action. There should be a proper mandate for awareness and implementation. Besides, an effective monitoring should come in place which will look after flow of debris to ocean from coast-line. Once these ensured, there will be tranquility in marine biology.