

1. Peak Plastics: Bending the Consumption Curve

Why in News?

- In recent, A new report suggests that plastic consumption in G20 countries will almost double by 2050, with the volume of plastic consumption rising to 451 million tonnes from 261 million tonnes in 2019

Highlights

- The report examined the potential impact of three key policies that cover the entire lifecycle of plastic, from production to disposal.
- These policies include a ban on problematic single-use plastic, a polluter pays extended producer responsibility scheme for full end-of-life costs, and a tax on virgin plastic production.
- The study found that a combination of these policies and bolder action, including possible restrictions on virgin plastic production, will bring about peak plastic and see consumption slow in the future.
- The researchers described peak plastic consumption as the point and volume at which global plastic consumption stops growing and begins to recede.
- The analysis is focused on the 19 countries of the G20 — Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The report warned that extended producer responsibility schemes will have a minimal effect on the consumption of single-use plastic products.
- A global ban on unnecessary single-use plastic items will be the most effective policy. South Korea was the first to do so nationally for selected products in 2019, later expanding the ban to other items. India, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and China have also imposed nationwide bans.
- Resistant, inert, and lightweight, plastic offers many benefits to companies, consumers, and other links in society. This is all because of its low-cost and versatile nature.
- In the medical industry, plastics are used to keep things sterile. Syringes and surgical implements are all plastic and single use.
- In the automotive industry, it has allowed a significant reduction in vehicle weight, reducing fuel consumption and, consequently, the environmental impact of automobiles.