

This was the 8th Edition of Webinar organised by AIPMA and had invited eminent experts to discuss Digital Conference on Flexible Packaging- Innovation for the New World. This conference was significant to prepare the industry about steps to take during COVID-19 & post COVID-19 new world.

EXPERTS who joined the webinar meet were Mr. Hiten Bheda, President AIPMA Mr. Jagat Killawala, Participants- Professor Dr. N.C. Saha, Mr. Venkatesh Kini, Co- Founder of Ubuntoo USA, Mr. Prakash Shetty, Partner VP Bizongo India, Mr. Shailendra Singh, Arvind Mehta - GC Chairman & Hosted by- Shiraz Sequiera.

Jagat Killawala addressed the participants and attendees by saying, “COVID-19 has changed the scenario of the plastic industry, while flexible packaging has always been a key application in the plastic value chain, be it food, groceries, or staple safety. Will this growth rate be maintained? and What innovations are needed in the new world post COVID-19 in the minds of the brand owners? Therefore, experts in this conference can throw some light on the new normal as they are the best in business.

NC Saha (Visiting Faculty IIT) was the Moderator for this webinar. He said, “ My sincere thanks for having me. I am sure the ‘New World’ a lot of publications say is going to be very intimidating to many consumers and industries. What are the changes we can expect? The major effects will be seen in the food habits, the lifestyle, the purchasing patterns and travel. Consumers will now be more conscious of their health in their daily choices, hygiene and safety”. He presented his views by mentioning the new world would have everyone maintaining social distancing and the cultural practices are also bound to change. The masks will become a regular addition to our dressing and the cashless transactions will boom. The digital marketing for packaged food etc will be more in the ‘New World’. And that he stressed on the fact that the industry members should not only be gathering new insights on packaging technology but also pick up what the new preferences of the consumer is given the circumstances.

He showcased on slides the figures and projections of the market growth that were expected before COVID-19 and how that will be a far-fetched dream if the productions do not align with new preferences. The statistical data shows that the market stood at \$825 Billion for the flexible packaging & by 2020 3-4% growth was expected, so \$950 billion was the projection. In India too, it was \$28 billion by the end of 2019, and the 2022 projection showed 11% growth but all of it has become a dream to achieve.

Another expert from **UNBUNTOO Mr. Venkatesh Kini** addressed the gathering and presented his contrasting views. He said, “I am into sustainability and marketing of flexible packaging. And my research shows that plastic packaging for food is very much sustainable for consumption purposes. It is lightweight, uses very little material but builds a significant layer of protection, is convenient to carry around, and it makes great sense to use plastic packaging material in today’s scenario”. Mr Kini believed that if we start using the alternative to plastic packaging like paper, glass, wood etc, it would be very much costly to the environment. The only problem is that as a packaging material it is not recycled. MLP is obviously built by many layers of polymers, colored and additives included hence, it is not collected by

rag-pickers and nor it is accepted easily by recyclers. Moreover, according to him, there are many new innovations at Unbuntoo that can be considered recyclable MLP. They convert MPL to monomers by pyrolysis to provide effective solutions to the flexible packaging industry. He was optimistic about India, having the bandwidth to see a few more opportunities of Research & Development as compared to other nations in terms of plastics. He was impressed by the India students and Universities making efforts to make sustainable polymers not harmful for the environment. He took to appreciating the work done by the Indian Institute of Packaging, Indian Institute of Science and said that he is hopeful to see Indian driving the wave of innovation in the globe.

Mr. Prakash Shetty, Partner VP Bizongo India:- Sustainability Innovation in Flexible Packaging. He also joined the conference and discussed Recycling Practices and the EPR status in India and other nations. By drawing comparative references, he concluded a few Recommendations for EPR in the final round of webinar discussion.

- 1) Design of Innovations for easier recycling of plastic packaging
- 2) Improvement of waste segregation at source, collection & sorting infrastructure
- 3) Targeting circular economy at every level of governance
- 4) Creation of economically viable business models for products made out of PCR.