**How does Mohit Kapoor incorporate social responsibility into his work? His plastic digging story?**

During a Reliance Foundation initiative, Mohit and his companions dug a few tractor loads (few tonnes only) of plastic out of the total 66,079 trucks (10 tonnes a truck) of plastic that is generated in India.

**my plastic digging experience near Mithi River + will our oceans contain more plastic than fish by 2050?**

Article written in LinkedIn on June 12, 2019

The past weekend was the one that counted.

I volunteered for Reliance Foundation initiative - Mithi River clean-up, circular economy, community development near Aarey Colony, Mumbai spearheaded by Afroz Shah.

The activity involved gloves, face mask, mosquito repellent, plastic boots - so you can imagine the work on hand was through tons of garbage and filth. I must agree that it was a great “exercise” for someone of my size and the sun also came handy to provide Vitamin D in abundance so no complaints at all.

But for me, the most intriguing thing in the activity was a plastic-digging experience. No less than gold-digging actually, just that more plastic we dug out .. more the chances we gave to our marine world to survive. I learned a lot of things through this activity and wanted to share a little bit here and even more importantly wanted to ignite the minds of a few start-up entrepreneurs in clean tech and circular economy.

**so what is this plastic problem in the world?**

Today, we produce about 300 million tonnes of plastic waste every year. That’s nearly equivalent to the weight of the entire human population.

8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the early 1950s. 60% has landed-up in either a landfill or the natural environment.

Credit: https://www.unenvironment.org/interactive/beat-plastic-pollution/

**how large is this problem in India?**

The average per capita consumption of plastic in India is 11 Kg (growing to 20 Kg in 2022) … it is actually 1/10th of US and 1/4th of China but with some basic research I did over the weekend – India is probably under-reporting this number massively as we accumulate heaps of plastic locally produced and that coming from the emerged world. Households generate maximum plastic waste in India, of which small packaging, water, and soft drink bottles form a very large part.

BTW, whopping 43% of manufactured plastics are used for packaging purpose and most are single use.

**how much are our lands, seas, and oceans affected?**

Our entire coastal ecosystem including 43% of all marine mammal species, 44% of all seabird species, 86% of all sea turtles are under threat.

Our seas near Mumbai, Kerala and the Andaman and Nicobar islands are among the worst polluted in the world.

Our landfills are emitting GHG gases among them carbon dioxide and methane constitute 90-98%.

**can we wake-up to this problem?**

Actually, joining over 70+ people from various parts of the city to clean a patch of the Mithi river covered in water hyacinth, plastic, and other waste over the weekend seemed like a great start for me. I encourage everyone to get some physical and nasal exercise along with loads of Vitamin D.

There’s a lot more that is being done by Afroz Shah alongside 17.9 Km River and anyone interested in digging deeper, please go through the article -https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/how-the-mithi-was-destroyed/article26298525.ece

**and can India show the way? my few cents?**

During plastic-digging, I realized for the first time that large part of the plastic problem in India is small packaging – shampoo sachets, candy wrappers, small plastic packaging of almost all FMCG products, etc.

We may not have thought like this but all FMCG companies are racing into the rural economic gold-mine of India with smaller and smaller sachets/ packaging and that will cause a catastrophe in a part of India that is still nestled with greenery and naturally circular economy.

I can tell you with experience now that it was the small sachets that caused the maximum pain during plastic digging and this is a much bigger problem on hand than the plastic problem in the emerged world.

We need to slow the flow of plastic at its source and we need to do it now. I am happy to support with connects all the start-up entrepreneurs who have or in process of building solutions to this massively growing problem of small packaging. Also, I urge all my connects and friends in Global and Indian FMCG companies (i am quite connected actually :)) to consider allocating CSR budgets towards a circular economy of plastic including technology and business innovations in this area.

If current trends continue globally, our oceans could contain more plastic than fish by 2050. Let’s stand-up and act on it, we owe it to our next generations…