

Cloth Bag Making Campaign of Kannur District

Cloth Bag Making Campaign of Kannur District, tells the story of a district which stood socially responsible for the welfare of the humanity and thereby founded livelihood for a group of common women. When the Kannur district administration banned the plastic carry bags Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission got a big opportunity to fill that space and the district mission used it wisely as a great opportunity and made maximum out of it. Let's see how Kudumbashree District Mission of Kannur made use of such an opportunity.

Plastic free Kannur

In April 2017, Kerala's Kannur became India's first plastic-free district, that too in just five months. And the man who played a pivotal role in this sustainable transformation was none other than Shri. Mir Mohammed Ali, District Collector of Kannur District. The focussed campaign towards phasing out plastic carry-bags and disposables was started during November 2016. Mir Mohammed Ali also directed heads of local bodies to take stern action against violating business establishments that continued to give away plastic carry bags and disposables such as plates and cups to the public. His determination and hard work paid off when the appreciative public joined the effort to make Kannur plastic free.

The drive, with the slogan “Nalla Nadu, Nalla Mannu,” that means a good village with good soil, made Kannur the first district in the country bereft of plastic carry bags and disposable articles.

Keeping up with the green protocol under the state government’s Haritha Keralam initiative, the sale or use of plastic carry bag and disposable articles like plate and cups has later become strictly prohibited. As of public gatherings, including marriages, the use of disposable articles would require permission from the concerned district officers.

Now, as a follow up to the district having achieved the plastic carry bag/disposable-free status, the local bodies have even started implementing measures that enforce compliance with the ban on plastic throwaway items, with extensive inspections in shops, markets and manufacturing units.

Cloth bag as an alternative for Plastic

At the same time of banning plastic in the district, under the guidance of District Collector, the district administration heavily encouraged the use of handloom-made bags made by various weavers’ cooperative societies of the district.

On 1 November 2016, a campaign with the objective of phasing out plastic carry-bags, was launched in the district of Kannur. At the same time, the use of handloom-made bags made by various weavers’ cooperative societies was heavily encouraged.

Cooperating with the district administration, shopping malls, super and hyper markets, hotels, catering agencies and auditoriums in the district have already started arranging handloom-made bags and boxes for packing food.

Opportunity for Kudumbashree Mission

On banning plastic in Kannur and declaring the district as plastic free, Shri. Mir Mohammed Ali, District Collector Kannur asked Kudumbashree Mission to get the list of the women who had been making cloth carry bags in large scale. The banning of the plastic carry bags became an opportunity for Kudumbashree Mission to act as a gap filler for providing cloth bags.

More than 50 super markets in the district had banned plastic bags and it was a wonderful scope for Kudumbashree Mission that around 10-15 lakhs cloth bag were needed in Kannur itself. The idea was put forward by the District Collector himself that Kudumbashree could make use of such an opportunity. And as per his directions, the list of the women who had been making cloth carry bags in large scale in the district had been prepared and were invited for attending the campaign.

As a result, Kudumbashree Mission arranged about 50 apparel units and individual tailors in the district and it was planned to arrange a campaign for the same.

Cloth Bag Making Campaign

A three day Cloth Bag Making Campaign was organised at Kannur Town Square from 20-22 March 2017 under the leadership of Kudumbashree Kannur District Mission. The invited entrepreneurs attended the campaign. The enterprises showcased the model of the cloth bags they were making starting from Rs 5 onwards. And the District Mission had received work order worth Rs 5 Lakhs. The order received was from private institutions. Work order for cloth bags was also received from Hantex, for the festive seasons like Onam, Christmas, Vishnu and other festive occasions.

The Mission got a golden opportunity that by conducting such a campaign they could find the real market for their products and the apparel parks got contact with such clients like Hantex and other private corporate organisations. This would help them in scaling up their business in the future.

Around 150 micro entrepreneurs focusing on cloth bag making attended the campaign. The entrepreneurs from outside the district also took part in the campaign. Many people from different parts of the district attended the programme and placed their orders. The cloth bags of Kudumbashree entrepreneurs and apparel parks were for exhibition and sale at the campaign. The alternatives for plastic were exhibited at the programme. The initiatives put forward by other governmental institutions, for avoiding the use of plastic was also shown at the programme.

A total of the work order of 6000 cloth bags was received from Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation itself.

The other private organisations also placed orders for the cloth bags that they found suiting their needs. The cloth bag campaign was of real help to the buyers and to the sellers as well.

The details of the cloth bag distributed by the apparel parks of Kudumbashree for Kerala State Handloom Development Corporation during Onam season of 2017 are as follows :

Sl No.	Name of the Unit	Description	No.of Cloth bags distributed	Rate	Total amount Received
1	Kannur Apparel Park	45 CM x 55 CM	840	9	Rs 15,840
		35 CM x 48 CM	1035	8	
2	Thaliparambu Apparel Park	45 CM x 55 CM	3873	9	Rs. 86,781
		35 CM x 48 CM	6712	8	
3	Kuttyattor Apparel Park	45 CM x 55 CM	969	9	Rs. 23,241
		35 CM x 48 CM	1816	8	
4	Nirav Activity Group, Kottiyoor	45 CM x 55 CM	1152	9	Rs. 47,439
		35 CM x 48 CM	4755	8	

The other work orders that Kudumbashree received was from private organisations. On the successful organisation of the campaign, the State Mission suggested all District Mission Co-ordinators to replicate the cloth bag making campaign and thereby to get more opportunity for the entrepreneurs in the state. By successfully and wisely organising the cloth bag making campaign, Kudumbashree Mission opened new horizons for the Kudumbashree Women in

the state and set a model that could be replicated and could make positive revolutions in fighting back against Plastic!