

Seema Pardeshi: Caring for the Environment

By

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The Ban on Plastics by the State Government of Maharashtra came into force on 23rd June 2018. But Seema Pardeshi Khandale has been working on a 3R Project, which is essentially, Recycle, Reuse and Reduce of Plastic bags since 2015 through her NGO Ashay Social Group.

Seema did her schooling and graduation in Dhulia. After completing her Bachelors in Botany she got married at 22. Though keen in doing her post -graduation, she wanted to give priority to her children and experience their growing years .She therefore happily settled down to be home maker. Though desirous of opening a nursery she was unable to do so mainly because her husband was in a transfer-prone Government job.

Seema felt she connected well with the elderly and was keen to help in counselling senior citizen, but she didn't have the education or experience for it .The urge to serve however remained .It got a kick start when her son suggested she should work to use her talents . Encouraged, she applied for Master's in Social work at IGNOU (Open University). She also became interested and passionate about the environment, the damage to which impacts all life. After completing her degree she worked for some time with various NGO's connected with environment. Then she thought of starting something on her own – specially in finding an alternative to the use of plastic bag, the mass consumption of which troubled her.

Seema's first effort was to start a project to recycle old used saris for making bags. Here her talent for fashion design and knowledge of stitching came handy. These bags are generally made by a team working for her in Bhuswar, from donated saris, duppatta, and blouse pieces. These bags are given as 'gifts' and not sold. Till now she has distributed more than15000 bags.



Her 2nd Project which she has been pursuing with great zeal and passion is regarding health, hygiene, and promotion of sustainable Menstrual options like Menstrual cups and Cloth Pads. The Menstrual cups and Pads are named RUTU which means season in Marathi.

Seema is indefatigable in her efforts to create awareness regarding the sustainable. Menstrual options to the sanitary pads in use now as also easing the pain and discomfort during the periods. She visits schools, colleges, hospitals various NGO's working in the field of improvement of Women's Health and Livelihood to inform and educate, as also to help them to make cloth pads. It was in a session organized by Giant Group of Mumbai One that I met her and was impressed by her commitment to the cause of menstrual hygiene and women's health

In December she joined hands with [Indian Women Blog](#) to conduct a drive in Jaipur to educate underprivileged women regarding the nature of menstrual cycle, hygiene and use of menstrual cups. The women from these sections who live from hand to mouth cannot afford tampons or sanitary pads .They use waste plastic and cloth without properly disinfecting them. The menstrual cups can be reused and last for nearly 15 years. During this drive which was named **Cold Period**, Winter Care Packages and menstrual cups were distributed. The Drive has been highlighted by the Blog-**The Better India**, which has a huge following as it focuses on Positive stories.

The initiative started by Seema is now gathering momentum: awareness regarding menstrual hygiene use of Menstrual cups and preparation of cloth pads at home is increasing.