



Eco-friendly bags - an alternative to plastic carry bags

Syamala M. P, Shylaja. G, Kripa V., Prema. D, AnilKumar, Shalini, Vysakhan P. and Seban John

ICAR- Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Kochi - 682018, 9400282879

Introduction

Fishery Environment and Management Division of CMFRI is always focussing on environment concern issues apart from Research on Marine Environment .One of the major threats the ecosystem faces in the present world is the impact due to non-degradable wastes especially plastics. Enumerable numbers of Plastics in the form of carry bags enter in to our houses and it has become an inevitable item in the daily life. But the improper waste disposal due to poor waste management facilities available in our society causes the accumulation of these non-degradable plastic materials on the road sides and open grounds there by polluting the ecosystem.

To prevent the issues caused by improper waste management, we must take immediate steps to control waste generation, to enhance facilities for better recycling recovery and reuse and to ensure proper collection and sustainable disposal. One of the most efficient management system as far as individuals concerned is, reduce the use of non-degradable materials as far as possible in our day to day life.

Present Scenario

Studies conducted by CMFRI among house holds in Mulavukad Village of Ernakulam District depicted that on an average, 2-3 numbers of carry bags are disposed of from each family in a day. The village has a statistics of 2000 families and around 15 Lakhs numbers of used carry bags are thrown as waste from the area per year, which is threatening and triggers serious environmental pollution issues.

How was it Done

Thinking on an alternative to reduce the use of plastic carry bags, Fishery Environment Division has initiated an attempt to popularise the use of a highly user- friendly cloth carrybags. The inspiration behind this was originated from Dr. Nirmala Padmanabhan,

Associate Professor, St. Teresas College, Ernakulam. Borrowing her technology, Mrs. Tasnim, a tailor from, Elamakkara was asked to supply eco friendly cloth bags to the division. Three types of stitched bags namely Ball bags, Shoulder bags and Purse bags which can meet almost all the shopping requirements for the houses, were collected from her and distributed to the needy.

Trainings Imparted

A training programme was initiated in 2015, during a one-day seminar “Urjakiran” jointly organised by the Energy Management cell, Thiruvananthapuram and CMFRI, Kochi. 25 numbers of ladies from Edavanakkad Panchayath were given hands on training with the help a Mrs. Taslim in bag making. Various training programmes were conducted in different localities in and around Ernakulum namely Panchayath hall, Vayana Sala, Community hall, Schools and Colleges and more than 250 ladies got benefitted out of it. In addition to cloth bags, hands on trainings were given for making paper bags. Though the cloth bags are washable, using the same for the purchase of fish and other meat products are not that much practical. Hence taking the clue from another well-wisher.



A reusable carry bag with synthetic material is designed and stitched which is of high demand now.

Sl No.	Place	Training /Sale	No. of persons benefitted
1	Edavankkad Village Panchayath Hall	Hands on training in bag making	30
2	Chettikkattu church hall, Moothakunnam	Training cum sale	25
3	Friends Festival ,Edapplaly	Exhibition cum sale of cloth bags	38
4	NSS Hall,Cheranalloor	Training on cloth and paper Bag making	25
5	PanditKaruppanVayanasala, Cheranallloor	Training on cloth and paper Bag making	30
6	St.Jameschool,Cheranalloor	Training on cloth and paper Bag making	40
7	St Maris College, Trichur	Training on cloth Bag making cum sale	40

The impact

Practicing these eco-friendly bags, the use of plastic carry bags is reduced to a great extent. Due to the awesome design and easiness in handling, many house wives are keeping it always in their hands to meet their day today need. Let us hope in the near coming future there will be a drastic reduction in the use of non-degradable bags.