

These techies deserve carbon credits

Software engineers offer plates made of leaves from arecanut trees at Dabgauli fair in Hosur forest range to reduce plastic waste

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After every fair, the venue is strewn with plastic. But in a bid to offer a environment-friendly alternative, a group of techies provided plates made of leaves from arecanut trees at this year's Dabgauli fair, which is held on the banks of the river Cauvery in the Eastern Ghats near Bangalore. They also dug huge pits to collect and dispose of the used plates and also other garbage left in the wake of the fair.

Dabgauli comes under Urigam range of Hosur Forest Division in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. It is known for a small temple dedicated to Basava, which attracts devotees throughout the year, mainly from nearby villages in Karnataka. However, the number goes up to over 15,000 during the annual two-day fair, held around the time of Shivaratri. The aftermath is a huge pile of garbage and plastic plates.

The techies, who call themselves Kenneth Anderson Nature Society (KANS), learnt about this problem last year. KANS president Laxmeesha Acharya, MD of Bangalore-based Dhithi Infoserve, said, "We took up the matter with the organising committee of the fair. We requested them to use bio-degradable plates made of leaves from arecanut trees. When the committee pleaded lack of funds, we offered to bear 50 per cent of the cost. We even found a supplier to deliver 30,000 plates. We also requested the committee to dig pits to collect and dispose of the used plates and other garbage."

Before the fair commenced on February 5, volunteers put up signs and directions for disposal of used plates and other waste. They also placed baskets made of jute in front of the stalls to collect waste, including tea cups, plastic bags, ice cream cups, etc.

During the fair, KANS repeatedly screened the Kannada version of the movie 'Nagarhole Tales from an Indian jungle' by Shekhar Dattatri, to drive home the message of conservation. The morning after the fair ended, the volunteers collected all the waste scattered all over the forest and disposed them of in the pits.

Aparna V Kolekar, a software engineer with Subex Ltd who handles publicity for the group, said KANS is concerned about the impact of the fair on the forests. "Firewood is collected from areas that are home to the Grizzled Giant Squirrel. Blaring loudspeakers and other human activities easily distress this animal, which is leading a precarious existence in these forests. There are proposals to tar the roads, bring electricity, build guest houses in this remote jungle and even plans to organise a cattle fair, which can easily bring in devastating infections," she said.



The volunteers cleaning up the mess
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