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PICS: MUTHU P

ONE MAN'S RUBBISH...

... is raw material for another one's product as participants at the Bengaluru Recycling Habba 2012 showed

There is money in waste if only one follows the three Rs of green goodness - reduce, re-use and recycle. That was the overriding message for visitors to the hugely-successful Bengaluru Recycling Habba 2012 organised by Bangalore Mirror Earth Warriors in association with the Solid Waste Management Round Table (SWMRT) at the SBM Jain College on the weekend.

Sheena F Dhanraj of Shae, for example, turns discarded liquor bottles into quirky and funky flower vases and old newspaper into baskets and coasters. Sheena explained that it was her love for painting that got her converting waste into interesting objects for daily use. "All I wanted to do was paint," she said. "I would paint on almost every surface I could find and I began drawing on bottles. Friends started buying them and that is when I knew I had a business going."

Glasshopper, a venture that creates home accessories out of scrap, is another example. Glasshopper was started by Ronson Anthony, a banker-turned-entrepreneur.

"The idea of Glasshopper was born after looking at a gift that my wife got a few years ago," said Anthony. "It was a flattened glass bottle showpiece. Intrigued I found out about it, did a few experiments and before

I knew it, it became a hobby. It soon blossomed into a full-

fledged business." One of the most interesting requests that Anthony got was from a newly-married couple who wanted to preserve their first champagne bottle they got as newlyweds.

"I flattened the bottle, slipped a picture of them in it and turned it into a wall hanging," he said.

Kirana, by self-help group Belaku Trust, churns out beautiful jewellery from old newspapers. Pellets of various shapes made from rolled paper are first dipped in dye and then in varnish to make them hard and waterproof. The beads are then used to make earrings and strung necklaces

that add an extra zing to any ensemble. The women in the group also make stationary with paper and patchwork toys from scraps of cloth.

Almost every conceivable type of waste - wet or dry - can be raw material for a new product. Vani Murthy, a Bangalore Mirror Earth Warriors expert, explained the nitty-gritty of waste segregation to visitors and also demonstrated ways to turn wet waste into compost.

There were several zero waste communities too which participated in the habba. Renaissance Brindavan in Uttahalli revealed how the 125 apartments contribute almost nothing to landfills. A Padmaja, one of the pio-

neers of the initiative, said, "We split the team into core, block and floor representatives. Once the initiative was started we also had weekly audits to see the outcome. Within months everyone was segregating waste. We send the dry waste for recycling while the wet waste is collected by the BBMP. From December 2011 up till September this year we have collected 3,974.8-kg of dry waste, excluding paper and big bottles."

Pinky Chandran and Marwan Abubaker, coordinators of Radio Active, a member of SWMRT, said that they have collected over 700 tonnes of dry waste since the start of this year from SBM Jain College.

"Currently we are segregating waste in three centres, but we will soon spread to nine others," said Pinky.

NS Ramakanth, a founder member of SWMRT, believes that managing solid waste isn't such a problem as the civic authorities make it out to be. All it needs is a little application.

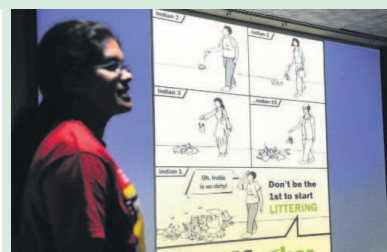
"If officials have 9,000 sq ft of vacant land in their ward, they can do many things," Ramakanth said. "They should first get a shredder for garden waste. This will reduce waste into tiny bits which decomposes faster. A collection centre is also important for storing sorted waste. Finally, each ward should invest in an organic converter that can turn wet waste into compost."



Stalls at the habba featured upcycled products such as stationery and jewellery made from old newspaper



LEFT: Sheena F Dhanraj. ABOVE: A section of the audience at a workshop conducted by experts in solid waste management



Old bottles that have been converted into lamps and clocks