

Plastic ban: Stores take baby steps as deadline closes in

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

R Ramesh Shankar

Chennai: With the deadline for the ban on plastic closing in on December 31, leading super markets in the city, boutiques and several smaller departmental stores have slowly started to shift towards providing an option of cloth bag and paper bag.

V Vijayalakshmi, a homemaker, has started carrying her own bag to the stores she visits to buy groceries. "Almost all major super markets in the city have stopped providing plastic bags. Earlier, they used to charge us but now they don't even have stock of plastic bags. I carry my own bag," she said as she packed her groceries from a leading departmental store in T Nagar.

Raj Narayanan, manager at Nilgiris supermarket, said, "We have stopped providing plastic bags for fruits and vegetables. Our company is providing only paper covers for these items. We have reduced plastic usage by at least two-thirds," he said. On Burkil Road, grocery stores have started providing thin cloth bags



GOING GREEN: People use paper bags to pick vegetables at a shop in Theagaraya Nagar in the city

as an alternative. "We are aware that we cannot provide or purchase plastic bags after December 31. So we have made the shift now itself to make customers aware," he said.

Jayashree Srinivasan, a resident, said she often brought her own bag and would not mind purchasing cloth bags for even ₹20. "It is just a habit we need to change. In malls and bigger shops, they charge ₹5 for a plastic bag. If we purchase four times, we pay ₹20. Instead, isn't it better to purchase one cloth bag that

can be folded and brought even in our pockets?" she asked.

But some departmental stores continue to purchase plastic bags on a daily basis as customers fight with them. "When we tell customers that we do not provide plastic bags, they fight. Unless they change their attitude, it is difficult for us," said a shop owner.

The civic body officials from the solid waste management department said they have begun holding awareness rallies.