

Book fair largely plastics-free

Sellers have switched to cloth or paper bags for packing



Environment conscious: Most visitors to the fair are bringing their own jute/cloth bags.

• S. R. RAGHUNATHAN

SANGEETHA KANDAVEL
CHENNAI

The 42nd edition of the Chennai Book Fair has a unique claim to fame – it is largely plastics-free. Booksellers are predominately using non-woven polypropylene bags and cloth bags to pack the books that they sell. Over 50% of the stalls are using brown paper covers in various sizes to pack books. Others use newspapers to wrap books.

The book fair is organised by the Booksellers and Publishers Association of South India (BAPASI).

At the Oxford University Press stall, the person in charge, said, “We have never used plastic bags. We have always given books in paper covers and this year we are using brown covers.”

“We have always given books in non-woven bags,” said C. Bharanitharan, the person-in-charge of Sahitya Akademi book stall.

The team in-charge at Notion Press Media Pvt. Ltd

I carried my own bags because I did not want to add more rubbish to the plastic pile

R. SUMATHI
Visitor

said that out of every 10 customers walking into their stall only five are asking for a bag or cover. The others come prepared.

Most booklovers who walked into the fair on Mon-

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day evening carried their own jute/cloth shopping bags.

R. Sumathi, who had two jute shopping bags filled with new books, said, “I carried my own bags because I did not want to add more rubbish to the plastic pile. Interestingly, all stalls here seem to have bid goodbye to plastic,” she said.

Suchitra R., a translator who visited the book fair on Monday evening, said, “Just look around the stalls and

you will see new books come sealed in a thin plastic cover. It is understandable that publishers want to protect the book. Booksellers should see whether there is a way avoid this plastic too,” she added.

One of the publishers who refused to be quoted said that most of the books come with a lamination so that they don't get damaged. “We don't mind throwing that thin sheet away. But there is no guarantee that all the books kept on display will be sold. If I have to send these books to another fair/event outside the State, I need the lamination cover,” he said.

Minimal use

M. Sirajudeen, executive member of the BAPASI, said that usage of plastic at the book fair had always been low. “The publishers themselves have consciously avoided bringing in plastic covers this time,” he said. There are over 820 stalls at the fair that is on till January 20 at the YMCA Grounds.