

Going Swadeshi for bettering their lives

By Express News Service - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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Photos



A view of the Swadeshi festival on in the city | express

The Swadeshi festival, on at the Gandhi Bhavan here, is the right place to be if you have a penchant for homemade desi items. The festival organised by the Gandhi Centre for Rural Development(GCRD) along with Kerala Gandhi Smarak Nidhi has classes on soap and detergent making, jewellery making, paper bag making and food processing training.

Like every time, it is the women folk who are turning up more at the venue. Whether that be to take lessons in soap-making or to buy the jackfruit health tone that is one item much sought-after here. The health tone, meant to bring down cholesterol levels, costs Rs 200 a bottle. The cholesterol controller tone, another health tonic, made by the swadeshi workers, is also much in demand.

“Creating awareness and conveying the importance of swadeshi goods are the main aims of the festival. The festival organises classes, seminars and exhibitions on swadeshi products. More than 300 swadeshi items have been included in the exhibition,” said Jayakumari, a swadeshi worker.

Natural soap, cleaning lotion, washing soap, detergent powder, hand wash and herbal tone are some of the swadeshi products kept for sale. Many cooking products and household goods have also been exhibited.

Dr Jacob Pulikan, Director of Gandhi Centre for Rural Development, and C K Viniraj, swadeshi coordinator, represent Thiruvananthapuram and Malabar

regions respectively. They lead the classes, for which many women have registered. Rema and Ragini, both teaching faculty at the State Institute of Mentally Challenged, Pangappara, have turned up to take some classes in swadeshi products. The classes mean so much to them since they train the mentally-challenged children above 16 years in soap-making back at the Institute.

“The children are encouraged to make soap, which is sold outside,” Rema said.

Latha Sunil, an entrepreneur, who has successfully got trained in swadeshi product-making said: “Active training takes place here with the help of these coordinators. After getting trained from them, I started making soaps and earn Rs 10,000 and more per month,” she said.

According to the swadeshi workers, they have already trained more than 1 lakh people, helping some 30,000 people earn their living out of this. Swadeshi products made by both individuals and units have been exhibited here. There is a permanent swadeshi store in Gandhi Bhavan if you want to pick up more products later.