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Councillors to show the way by using cloth bags

Elected representatives of the 16 town panchayats in Vellore district are set to show the way to the public on avoiding use of polythene bags.

In a step towards reducing plastic use, particularly plastic bags less than 40 microns, the Department of Town Panchayats has given cloth bags to chairpersons, vice chairpersons and councillors of town panchayats in the district.

The ill effects of using plastic have been printed on the cloth bags such as it reduces groundwater levels, causes death when cattle consume plastic bags and burning of plastic causes 52 kinds diseases.

At a meeting held on Wednesday, S.M. Malayaman Thirumudikari, assistant director of Town Panchayats, Vellore, said they were taking several steps to avoid use of plastic bags.

“First, the elected representatives should stop using plastic bags. If we follow this, then others will follow suit,” he said.

He asked the representatives to start the initiative at their homes and then spread the message among the public.

“We can reduce plastic use by conducting checks but this needs behavioural change in the people,” he noted.

While garbage segregation and collection was almost 100 per cent from commercial establishments, the problem persisted at the door-to-door level.

“People do not segregate garbage at their homes. Though workers collect the garbage from houses, people tend to dump remaining garbage on the roads later. This dirties the streets. The elected representatives should tell the people in their town panchayats to dispose garbage properly,” he added.

Doing well

Sholinghur, Panapakkam and Alangayam town panchayats were doing well in solid waste management, he said, adding,

“Another six town panchayats will be covered in the solid waste management project during 2014-15. We will work to bring all the town panchayats under the project.”

Collector R. Nanthagopal, who handed over the bags to the representatives, said that town panchayats were doing well in plastic management.

“However, there are several municipalities in Vellore and they should also concentrate more on municipal solid waste management,” he said.

He pointed out to how plastic bags were a huge problem to both cities and villages.