

As Diwali approaches, many are trying to dispose of things they don't need any longer. Several NGOs and non-commercial platforms are there to help

IT'S DECLUTTERING Season

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For Namrataa Kamath and her husband Shunil Ohrie, residents of a villa in Adarsh Palm Retreat in Bellandur, decluttering has been a daunting task.

While getting ready to welcome twins in December, they have repurposed their son Neil's old clothes, furniture and a whole cupboard for the li'l ones. "We spent the weekend decluttering Neil's room," says Namrataa. "Shunil does all the heavy lifting, meticulous cleaning and disinfecting," she smiles, adding their dog loves being part of the chaos.

Despite their best efforts to keep their home tidy, piles of stuff that they want to get rid of keep growing. "There are blankets, old curtains and cushions that we want to give away. The medicine cabinet needs an overhaul too," says Namrataa.

Diwali is just around the corner and many are in decluttering mode. For residents like Namrataa, help is just a call away. Several NGOs and RWAs in the city allow you to donate your clutter. Some go a step further and organise thrift stores. Whitehouse apartments is one such. "In our community's thrift store, you can sell your old clothes, toys and books and raise funds for welfare activities," says Sowmya Raghavan.

Barter is making a comeback

Bengalureans are even beginning to look at barter systems in a bid to reduce consumption and get rid of used products more responsibly. HSR Citizen Forum organises the exchange of pre-loved (previously owned and used, but still in good condition) sarees and other clothes. "We are planning to keep drop boxes in ten apartment complexes in the near future where people can



For sentimental folks like us, decluttering means organising, re-purposing, and finding a new home for things that were special to us. We abstain from impulsive buying and get a home services company to do deep cleaning.

Namrataa Kamath and Shunil Ohrie | RESIDENTS, ADARSH PALM RETREAT, BELLANDUR



Let's Deklutter runs on WhatsApp. It is more than just a platform to clear out unused items - it also encourages mindful purchasing. We have had excellent examples of reuse of tiles, bricks, wooden flooring, toughened glass and fixed kitchen cabinets. One of the members - who rehomed used toughened glass and fixed almirahs while renovating - said the joy of seeing these pieces find new homes instead of becoming landfill waste was priceless.

Kiran Gupta | FOUNDER, LET'S DEKLUTTER

drop off their sarees and other clothes and pick what they like. The trend of pre-loved is picking up, though we would like everyone to be doing that," says Jayanthi Srikanth, executive

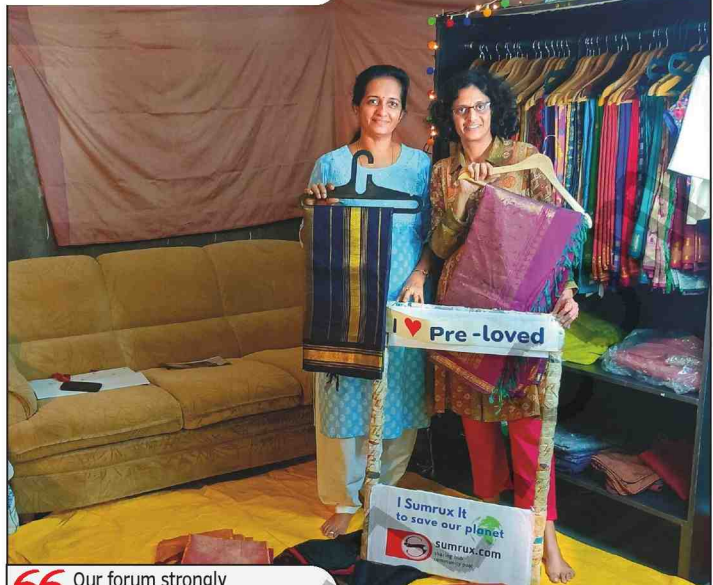
member of HSR Citizen Forum.

At Mirabilis apartment in Horamavu, exchange of books is an eagerly anticipated event. "What started as a holiday idea is now building stronger bonds in our community and showing that sustainability truly begins at home," says Robin Mathew, president of Mirabilis Apartment Owners' Association (MAOA).

Super 20/ Santhe

Seven years ago, WeCan, a voluntary group, driven by residents of Godrej Woodsman Estate in Hebbal, came up with a thoughtful initiative - Super 20/ Santhe. "It's a loving exercise of dignified charity where staff in the society purchase pre-loved merchandise and enjoy a marketplace, haggling and bantering with resident volunteers. All

clothes are priced at a token Rs 20 with medium to larger items priced at Rs 50 and Rs 100," says Sunith, a volunteer, adding Super

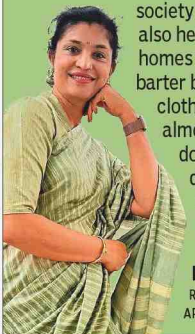


Our forum strongly advocates swapping of pre-loved clothing instead of getting drawn into fast fashion trends and accumulating textiles more than what is needed. As a part of our Diwali initiative, we are encouraging people to declutter their wardrobes and share clothes in good condition through the drop boxes at Swachagraha Kalika Kendra, Sumrux swap platform or Saahas drop boxes being planned in apartment complexes. The trend is catching on and we see a lot of enthusiasm from people willing to swap clothes. Bengaluru generates more than 220 tonnes of textile waste every day, and we can all choose to be part of the solution. We cannot afford to send so much textile into landfills.



Jayanthi Srikanth | EXECUTIVE MEMBER, HSR CITIZEN FORUM

Let's reduce waste, save money and build stronger bonds in our society through sharing. It also helps us keep our homes clutter-free. We can barter books, plants, kids' clothes they've outgrown, almost-new clothes that don't fit, unused gifts, decor items and more. What's extra for one can be useful for another!



Nilima Singnurkar | RESIDENT, HIRANANDANI APARTMENTS, BENGALURU

Our apartment complex began a trust-based holiday book exchange where neighbours lend and borrow books with care. It's a simple step to cut consumption while spreading the joy of reading.

Midhili R | RESIDENT AND INITIATIVE LEAD, MIRABILIS APARTMENT

Bengaluru generates about 220 tonnes of textile waste daily, making up 4% of municipal waste. Responsible disposal of textile waste is a crucial need. Through the 'Got Old Clothes?' initiative by Invaluable Bengaluru, residents can WhatsApp 97417 30854 to find the nearest DWCC (dry waste collection centre) or arrange a pick-up for larger volumes. A recent collaboration with the Bangalore Apartments' Federation (BAF) collected over 500 kg of textiles from six apartment communities. Saamuhika Shakti and partners are creating a post consumer textile waste value chain that creates livelihoods for waste pickers while driving environmental impact.



Zibi Jamal | FOR SAAMUHIKA SHAKTI, SATTVA CONSULTING



20/ Santhe has been their annual ritual ahead of Diwali since 2018.

Every item deserves a second home

Wondering how to get rid of your old electronic devices and household items and earn some money? You can connect with Kiran Gupta's Let's Deklutter, a non-commercial, community-driven platform that runs on WhatsApp and which allows purchase and sale of pre-loved products. Let's Deklutter has blossomed into a network of over 39,000 members through 175 WhatsApp groups, spanning across 200 cities. Bengaluru has emerged as one of its crown jewels, home to 28 thriving neighbourhood groups with over 11,000 members.

"It's so easy to be a part of the

community - just join your area group and start using it. We operate entirely on WhatsApp, making the platform accessible to all - whether a youngster or a senior citizen," says Kiran, who heads a team of 50 volunteers who ensure smooth exchanges and foster trust.

Kiran started her sustainability journey 25 years ago as a hobby, upcycling paper and fabric. She recalls that Let's Deklutter blossomed from an observation at a garage sale. "I noticed that people were eager to give away things they no longer needed, while many were keen on taking them home. That moment sparked a realisation - unless the middle class starts reusing within their own circles, over-manufacturing would never truly reduce," she says.



Decluttering is a huge challenge for us as we are not a gated community. We organise electronic and medical waste collection drives regularly. We also collect used flowers and compost them. Incidentally, our next drive is on Oct 5. We have partnered with an NGO that ensures the collected waste is disposed of responsibly. We also arrange for pick-up of construction debris. A few years ago, representatives of the Pollution Control Board visited our colony and appreciated our work.

Sumi Prabhakar | VICE PRESIDENT, DECORA (DEFENCE COLONY RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION), INDIRANAGAR